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# ARTICLE 47.

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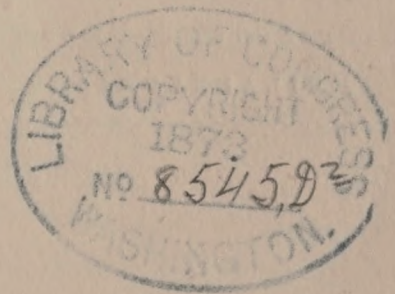
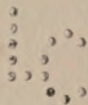
FROM THE FRENCH

OF

ADOLPHE BELOT.

BY

JAMES FURBISH.



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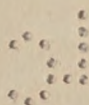
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# ARTICLE 47.

## PART I.—THE GIRL OF COLOR

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### I.

THE young man who ten years ago was discharging the duties of porter and watchman in the Admiralty Hotel at Havre had but just risen and opened the large door of the hotel facing Marine Wharf, when he heard his name called under the vestibule, at the foot of the large staircase.

Being astonished that an inmate of the hotel was up at this early hour,—hardly six o'clock,—he hastened to answer the call, and found himself in the presence of a lady of some fifty years of age, and of respectable appearance. She had on a traveling shawl, a bonnet of the simplest kind, but elegant in form, and held in her hand a Russia leather valise, which an English merchant had just brought into fashion.

"Did madame call?" said the porter.

"Yes, my friend; I would like to speak to the proprietor of the house."

"But he is asleep, madame."

"The same reply was made when I arrived last night. I wish to obtain certain information from him."

"I can give it to the lady, no doubt, if she would——"

"From what quarter do the ships arrive?"

"From the sea."

"Evidently," said the lady, smiling; "but where is the *sea*?"

"If madame will follow me," said the porter, "I will show it to her."

They passed from under the vestibule through the door on to the wharf, near the landings of Honfleur, Trouville, and Caen steamers.

"The sea is away off there," said the porter, pointing to the right. "You cannot see it now, because it is hid by the masts of the ships, smoke-stacks of steamers, and the tower of Francis I., but by going a few steps along the wharf——"

"Very well, thank you. And can you tell me," said she, "if the Zurich has arrived at Havre?"

"The Zurich? Don't know her," said the porter. "Is it a ship?"

"An American sailing-ship, from New Orleans."

"I cannot inform the lady."

"I feared as much, and that is exactly the reason why I wanted to talk with the proprietor of the hotel."

"My master knows no more about it than *I* do," said the porter, bridleing up.

"Who *can* give me this information, if you please?"

"The first seafaring man you meet. Hold! that old gentleman yonder, smoking a cigar in front of India Hotel; he is a retired sea-captain, and knows by heart all the vessels which enter the basin."

"I will speak to him. Thank you, friend."

She was about going to speak to the man pointed out, when the watchman or porter through curiosity, or desirous of complying with the rigid instructions



given by the Havre police, begged her to be kind enough to return to the hotel and write her name in the register. She hastened to comply with the request, and the porter was able to read over her shoulder,—

“Madame Du Hamel, widow, Paris. Verneuil Street, No. 32.”

Madame then left the Admiralty Hotel, and was on her way to speak with the captain.

The latter, with that politeness which characterizes most seafaring men, on seeing approach a woman who appeared to belong to the better class of society, lifted his hat and bowed politely.

“Sir,” said Madame Du Hamel on approaching him, “the porter of my hotel assures me that you can give me some information which would be valuable to me at this time, and I take the liberty of interrupting you in your promenade.”

“You have done right, madame; and if I can be of any service to you—pray what is your wish?”

“I would like to know, sir, if the Zurich has arrived at Havre within two or three days?”

“No, madame, I can assure you she has not entered the port, and that she is not yet signalized. Do you expect any one, madame?”

“Yes, sir; my only son, whom I have not seen for six years.”

She uttered these words in such a tone of voice that the captain was quite captivated.

At first, he thought he might be talking with one of those curious women whom the railroads bring every day to Havre, and who overwhelm with questions the sailors who are unfortunate enough to fall in their way. But no, it was a mother who was questioning him; a mother, anxious no doubt as to the fate of her child. The situation was changed: she became interesting; and the captain, throwing away his cigar, gave to understand by this sacrifice that he was entirely at her service.

“The last letter I received from my son,” said Madame Du Hamel, “was dated the 10th of May, informing me that he should embark the next day. This letter came to hand more than fifteen days ago, and I began to be so uneasy that I determined to come to Havre to wait for the arrival of the Zurich.”

“You have no occasion to be anxious, madame. Your letter has been one week in coming from New Orleans to New York, and twelve days from New York to Paris by steamer. As to the Zurich, which is a sailing vessel, she requires at least from thirty-five to forty days to go from New Orleans to France. Observe that I say *at least*. Passages have been known to last from sixty to seventy days.”

“Ah, bless me! have I to wait a month longer?”

“It is not probable. The Zurich is an excellent sailer, which, in good weather, makes her ten or twelve knots an hour, just like a steamer. She is, besides, commanded by a first-rate captain, and if he left on the 18th of May——”

“He may arrive at any moment, may he not?” said Madame Du Hamel.

“Undoubtedly; but if he has met with contrary winds, or a calm, which is not rare at this season of the year——”

“Oh, no, sir; don’t tell me that! I had rather wait. Ah, if you but knew how I long to embrace him!”

Her eyes watered and her voice trembled. Suddenly she said,—

“Something tells me that he must arrive soon, perhaps even this very day. I should not be so much agitated if he were far away from me. The heart of a mother is never mistaken! Since he left me he has often been in danger. Well, I was informed of it without any one’s writing to me about it. Yes, I saw him when he was sick; I saw him when he was wounded. I suffered, though three thousand miles away, at the very moment that he was suffering. There exist, you must understand, mysterious ties and sympathies between a mother and her son. But to-day,



on the contrary, I feel my heart rejoiced, and life seems to me beautiful. It is because he is happy and well. It is because he is coming, he *is* coming, the dear child!"

The old sailor listened to her in silence, and looked at her with pleasure. He had forgotten the slightly gray hair and the few wrinkles and folds here and there upon the face of her who was talking with him. He saw only her gracious smile, her charming teeth, and her eyes still young and expressive. He was under the charm of that distinguished and honest demeanor, that sympathetic voice full of irresistible tenderness.

She was not aware of the sentiment she was inspiring, and returning suddenly to herself, she said,—

"Ah! pardon me, sir, for thus annoying you."

"How can you say that, madame?" replied he, feelingly. "I have children at this moment afloat on distant and dangerous seas."

She made no reply, but showed that she was a woman of heart, and extended to him her hand. Did there not exist between them a secret affinity? Had they not the same fears and hopes?

## II.

MADAME DU HAMEL had no longer any fear of being indiscreet with the guide that chance had given her. He had proposed to escort her down to the landing and point out to her the course the *Zurich* must take in order to enter the port of Havre. She had accepted, and after following Marine Wharf and crossing Museum Square, they talked awhile about the unimproved grounds along by the Hôtel Frascati and thence to the landing.

"So then, captain, you laugh at my presentiments; you don't admit that my son may arrive to-day?"

"We sailors," said he, "are always a little superstitious; and I am tempted to allow myself to be convinced by you. But it has just struck seven, it is high water at ten, and the *Zurich* is not yet signalized."

"How do you know?"

"Her name would be written on the board attached to the signal tower."

"Then we must no longer hope," said she, with a sigh.

"I dare not encourage you,—and yet— if I am not mistaken, they are making at this moment a signal from Cape Hève. Please wait a moment, madame, and I will be with you again."

He went off in the direction of the signal tower, passed through the gate which protects this important post from public curiosity, and disappeared for a moment, to reappear soon on the circular platform, which serves as an observatory to the watchmen of the post.

Madame du Hamel saw him exchange some words with the sailor in uniform, who, for a moment, had already been occupying the circular platform; then, after consulting the horizon by the aid of a telescope, saw him again descend the ladder of the tower and advance towards his companion.

"Well," said she.

"Nothing yet positive, but there are chances. I would bet something now on your game."

"Oh, captain! in order to talk to me in this way, you must have a good deal of hope. Tell me the whole; I am strong and can bear it; come! Don't be afraid of inspiring hopes that will not be realized. If we are mistaken, it shall be for to-morrow, or day after to-morrow. I will wait."

"Yes, yes, I understand that. I have been in that state of mind myself," said the old sailor, in an under-tone. "You are getting it into your head that it is he; and if it is not he, you will be in despair."

"No, no; tell me, I beg of you!"

"Well, a sail has just been signalized



yonder in the direction of the open sea; it is a large vessel, a three-master, and an American."

"Are any other American vessels expected in Havre about this time?" asked she.

"They expect the Florida, the Winfield Scott, and the United States. Only one of these vessels is a three-masted bark (and that which we perceive yonder is a three-master of at least twelve hundred tons); the other is a brig; and the third so bad a sailer that she cannot possibly arrive before the Zurich, although she left three days before her."

"But then, captain——"

"Then, madame, be calm; and in half an hour, a quarter perhaps——"

"Calm, calm! Ah, sir! what is that you say? And in order to be settled as regards my fate, shall I be obliged to wait till the name *Zurich* is written upon that little board you have shown me?"

"No, madame; I am going up there again on the platform where you have already seen me, and as soon as I shall know anything for certain you will be informed."

"Ah, captain, how many thanks! To think, that if I had not met you——"

"All right, all right," said the captain, while going; "you can thank me hereafter."

Two minutes had not passed when he appeared again on the top of the signal tower.

Anxious and restless, she followed every movement, and tried to catch the sense of his least motion.

Suddenly, after pointing for a long while his telescope to one point of the horizon, he took off his hat and swung it in the air. She understood it.

That motion meant *victory*! your sentiments were well founded! It is the Zurich! It is your son!

She became quite pale. Her limbs failed her. It was with difficulty she was able to sit down upon the parapet of the wharf.

When, a moment after, the captain rejoined her, she was weeping profusely.

"Come, come," said he, "don't give up to that. I understand this feeling: one can bear great sorrows without shedding a tear, but is overcome by excessive joy."

"So it is in reality the Zurich?" said she, smiling on the captain through her tears.

"Oh, this time there is no mistake; I know my Zurich among fifty vessels."

She interrupted him in these words:

"But if he is not on board?"

"Ah, I expected you would come to that! That's it, that's exactly it! Just now the whole thought was on the vessel: will she come, or will she not come? She comes. You should be at the height of happiness, and have no more fear. Not at all. You tremble anew. Is the list of passengers complete? Has nothing happened to them during the passage? How natural is that, and how well I recognize myself, when I am expecting my sons!"

She listened to him no longer, but led him away to the end of the landing, in the direction of the light-house, and endeavored to pierce the horizon.

"Do you see anything?" said the captain, smiling.

"Nothing."

"She is quite perceptible, however, now. See, yonder. No, you are not right. You are looking in the direction of the river for Caen. Here, follow my finger. That's it. In a minute you will see her better. The fog is being dissipated with the rising tide; the wind is rising and dispersing the clouds. That *diable* of a Zurich, with her spread of sails, and the good breeze she has in the offing, will be able to enter the harbor this very day."

"How!" exclaimed she, tremblingly, "have you any doubt on the subject?"

"Why, yes,—if she misses the tide; she has only two hours before her."

"And then what?"

"She would be obliged to cast anchor in the roadstead, or stand to the windward, till to-morrow's tide."



"Dear me!"

"But be of good cheer. Everything looks favorable. The wind freshens again. Two hours will be sufficient for the Zurich to enter the port, and I see yonder a large tow-boat all ready to go for her, if the wind should happen to lull. And what are you going to do with yourself during these two hours?"

"Do you ask? I don't quit the wharf. What would *you* do if one of your sons were aboard this ship?"

"I should wait."

"No doubt you would. But I am taking up too much of your time, captain. Please resume your liberty, and believe me when I tell you that I am under infinite obligations to you for the kindness you have shown me since the morning."

"I leave you, madame, but do not bid you adieu. I shall return to you the moment the Zurich enters the port, and will be at your service if you shall wish to go on board."

"Oh, yes, certainly, thank you. He does not dream of my presence in Havre, and I wish to surprise him."

The old sailor retired in the direction of Paris Street, and Madame Du Hamel remained on the wharf, with her eyes fixed upon the ship, whose elevated hull and elegant masts were beginning to be distinctly seen.

### III.

As the captain had foreseen, at ten o'clock in the morning, without the assistance of a tow-boat, the Zurich was seen entering the port of Havre.

There is nothing more majestic, and at the same time more exciting, than the arrival of a large ship which has just accomplished a long voyage. The dangers she has incurred, and the bad weather she has experienced, are legibly written upon her strained and often torn canvas,

on her sometimes broken masts, and upon her hull, whose colors, so brilliant on departure, have been tarnished or effaced by the continual dashing of the waves.

Therefore, at high water, the wharf is the favorite promenade of the inhabitants of Havre. As soon as it is known in the city that a steamer of the Transatlantic Company, or a large sailing ship, has just been signalized, everybody starts for the wharf; and soon the landing-places, ordinarily deserted at low water, become as lively as Paris Street.

The captain, who two hours before had left Madame Du Hamel in a sort of solitude, had some difficulty in finding her; but he soon rejoined her, as he had promised.

"Well, madame," said he, on approaching her, "you are now happy. In a few minutes your son will pass before you."

"Will he pass near enough for me to be able to see him?" asked she.

"Certainly. You will see him for a moment as plainly as I see you."

"Dear heart!" said she, with a sigh. "Shall I recognize him, among all the people who will be on deck? It is so long since I saw him! He was hardly twenty when he left me, and he is now more than twenty-five."

"Look, look!" said the captain; "the Zurich is coming directly towards us."

There was no need of giving this advice; she *was* looking with all her eyes and all her heart.

In the fore part of the ship the sailors were variously occupied in obeying orders given by the officers. Near the mizzen-mast was a crowd of passengers, saluting with hand and handkerchief friends whom they thought they recognized in the distance. In the after part of the ship were to be seen the captain, pilot, and mate, a woman with her bonnet on all ready to go ashore, two passengers of about fifty years of age, and a young man of about twenty-five, leaning against the mizzen-mast shrouds and smoking a cigar.

For a minute, Madame Du Hamel, un-



able to stand, had taken the arm of her companion. Suddenly, when the stern of the Zurich was just abreast of her, she uttered a shriek.

"Did you recognize him?" said the captain.

"Yes, yes; there he is!"

She designated the young man leaning against the shrouds, and being no longer conscious of where she was, she made signs with her handkerchief, sent kisses to him through space, and smiled and wept, half crazy with happiness.

But he who thought his mother was at Paris could not suspect that all this pantomime was directed to him.

The Zurich had passed the wharf, and was now slowly advancing towards the custom-house dock. The visitors, as if the curtain had dropped and the show was over, had left the scene and were on their way to Paris Street.

Madame Du Hamel alone remained, as if fixed to the spot, thinking only of one man, her beloved son.

"Madame," said the captain, "are you going on board?"

"On board? yes!" exclaimed she; "I wish to embrace him and press him to my heart." She had taken the captain's arm and was hastening away in the direction the Zurich had taken. When they came up with her, she had just stopped at the place which had been temporarily assigned her. Two large ships separated her from the wharf, but their decks, across which planks had been laid, put the Zurich in direct communication with the wharf.

Already a crowd of people had rushed on board the newly-arrived vessel; friends and relatives of the captain, clerks of the owner, policemen, custom-house officers, hotel boys, and commissioners of all sorts offering their services to the passengers.

On the wharf were coachmen and hand-cart men, and hundreds of curious people looking on. Everywhere was noise and confusion.

The captain was about deciding to cut his way through the crowd in order to go

on board, when he thought he recognized in a boat leaving the Zurich and approaching the wharf the young man whom Madame Du Hamel had designated as her son. In his eagerness to quit the ship after a long passage, in order to get ashore more speedily, he had availed himself of one of the numerous boats that come alongside of a large vessel as soon as she enters the port.

"Your son is probably married?" said the captain to Madame Du Hamel.

"No," replied she.

"Ah! I was thinking; is that not he who is coming towards us, off there in that boat? There is a lady sitting in the stern."

She looked earnestly and exclaimed, "Yes, yes, that is he! there he is!"

The captain was obliged to restrain her, lest she might commit some imprudence.

"He is doubtless escorting a lady passenger who is as anxious as he to reach the shore."

Madame Du Hamel listened to him no longer. She had sprung forward to one of the stairs of the wharf which the boat was trying to reach.

"George! George!" exclaimed she, "it is I! I am here! Come, come!"

George raised his head, looked, and recognized his mother. Then he leaped from the boat, climbed the stairs with surprising agility, and seizing in his arms the dear woman weeping for joy, he pressed her to his heart and covered her with kisses. Some steps off stood the old captain, looking at them, while large tears ran down his cheeks.

"When my sons come ashore," said he, "after a long absence, I appear just as weak as that mother and son do now. Good! why, I am in tears now! Let us go to breakfast; she has no longer any need of me now, and I will not have the indiscretion to put myself in the way of receiving her thanks. But would she think of giving me thanks on such an occasion as this?"

And, as this excellent man still felt



quite overcome, he thought he would light a cigar as a sort of consolation to the afflicted.

Madame Du Hamel and George perceived that the place was not the proper one for the manifestation of their joys, and that they would be more comfortable at the hotel.

"Come, come," said she to George, trying to drag him along with her, "I alighted at the hotel you see opposite,—the Admiralty. We have only the wharf to cross."

He was about to follow her, when a thought struck him. Upon seeing his mother he had forgotten everything; but, after the first emotions of tenderness, memory returned.

"Proceed on," said he; "I will be with you shortly. I must take leave of one of my traveling companions."

She obeyed without saying to herself that the leave-taking must have already taken place on board, and that, as regarded the traveling companion, the boat contained only one woman. And what the old captain had foreseen took place. She did not think of looking for him in the crowd, in order to thank him for consecrating the morning to a stranger. She went off, light and joyous, entirely absorbed in him whom she had just seen again, and saying to herself,—

"How he has grown! how handsome he is! We will leave each other no more; we will love each other for the five years that have gone by."

As soon as he was alone, George, with an anxious eye, began to look after some one in the crowd.

What had become of the person with whom, but a few minutes before, he had left the Zurich?

He soon found her, surrounded by the hotel employees offering her their service.

"I beg your pardon," said he, running up to her, "that was my mother."

"You ought to have informed me of it, at least," said she. "You, perhaps, think

that I am perfectly at my ease in the midst of all these people, in this country which I am not acquainted with!"

She uttered these words with a certain dryness, but a very decided Creole accent softened the roughness of her voice.

"My dear friend, in order to give you any information on this subject, it would have been necessary for me to suspect that my mother was waiting for me in Havre. On seeing her, I thought only of running to embrace her. You understand and pardon me, I am sure you do."

"What I understand, especially at this time," said she, "is the need of going to a hotel, that I may not remain here exposed and alone."

"That is very true. Here is the India Hotel, of good appearance, and I think you will be very comfortable there."

"How! I shall be very comfortable there? Will you not go there with me?"

"I will join you as soon as I have the time, but at present I must devote myself to my mother."

This phrase inspired George's companion with this reply,—

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* how tired I am already of your country! I have done wrong to follow you."

"I thought," said he, a little hurt, "that you had a great desire to see France?"

"I imagined it different from what I find it. New Orleans is much more gay and agreeable than Havre."

"We shall not stay in Havre, but go soon to Paris."

"Paris! Paris! Still another disappointment, perhaps."

While talking thus they came to the India Hotel, which is but a few steps from the Admiralty Hotel. While crossing the threshold they were met by a sailor from the Zurich. The captain had sent him to inform them that their baggage had just been transferred to the custom-house, and that they might go and receive it.

"You would be very obliging, my dear



Cora," said George to his companion, "if you would attend to this business yourself. Here is the custom-house building; you will easily distinguish our baggage, and you have all the keys."

"It is also very amusing," replied she, "to go and shut myself up in a hotel room all alone, and I shall get my dresses sooner."

"I shall see you again soon," said George, as he left for the Admiralty Hotel.

"Don't hurry on my account," cried Cora.

These last words, and especially the tone in which they were pronounced, made George shudder.

He had a right perhaps to count upon more tenderness on the part of his traveling companion. He was tempted to retrace his steps, in order to change this coolness, and explain his conduct, so natural however, and to get pardoned; but his duties as a son had claims upon him. His filial affection triumphed at this moment over every other sentiment, whatever it might be. He hurried off to the Admiralty Hotel, inquired for his mother's rooms, and proceeded to rejoin her.

#### IV.

SHE whom he had called Cora was during this time on her way to the custom-house building. She was nearly there, when a young man, from twenty to twenty-three years of age, irreproachably dressed, with a rose in his button-hole and a light cane in his hand, accosted her with his hat off, and said,—

"You appear to me to be a stranger, madame. I have lived in Havre ever since I was a boy, and am perfectly well acquainted with the place. Will you allow me to offer you my services? The custom-house is often noisy, and I can enable you to avoid a multitude of little annoyances."

"But, sir," said she, raising her eyes towards him who was addressing her.

"You can accept my offer, madame," replied he, in a tone which he attempted to render serious, but in which appeared a degree of irony. "It is made with the greatest respect and disinterestedness. Permit me, if you please, to introduce myself. My name is Victor Mazilier, and I am the only son of the richest ship-owner in Havre."

When she looked at him more attentively, he continued, flourishing his cane with an elegance quite Parisian,—

"I was passing along on Marine Wharf, a short time ago, in order to go on board of one of my father's numerous ships, when my attention was attracted by the arrival of the Zurich. The passengers, as usual, appeared desirous of disembarking as soon as possible. I wished to be present at the show. I must tell you, madame, that we young men are terribly annoyed in Havre. It is an insupportable city, where they talk only about sugar, cotton, or coffee. I am a Parisian in soul, and like only the Italian boulevard, the English coffee-house, and the *Maison Dorée* (the gilt house). Have you heard of the *Maison Dorée*?"

"Sometimes," said she, timidly, casting down her eyes.

"I suspected it. At New Orleans they must talk a great deal about the *gilt house*."

"How do you know that I come——"

"From what other place could you come? You are a Creole from Louisiana. It is written on your face. Does any other part of America produce such beautiful women?"

This compliment, so common, and so brutally paid, must make a lively impression upon Cora, but from a motive different from the allusion made to her beauty. Little did she care about the homage paid to her. Was not her beauty incontestable, confessed by all who approached her?

Everything in her was admirable: jet-



black hair, long black eyelashes, covering eyes of somewhat elliptical form, sharp, tender, passionate, cruel, or languid at will; eyes which speak and express all the passions, the best and the worst; which say I adore you, or I hate you; timid and drowned in tears at one moment, flames of fire at another, and always voluptuous; a nose, not perfect if measured by the rules of art, but one of the most charming, with rose-colored nostrils dilate and tremulous; a fine auburn down on her thick lips of lively red, a little turned up, and always ready to show small, well-set white teeth; and over this charming face was diffused that *warm paleness*, so to speak, of women born in tropical countries.

She had been aware of all these perfections for a long time. She knew also that she was as well shaped as she was beautiful. Her broad shoulders, her well-developed bust, and all other parts requisite to a perfect figure, were all in perfect keeping with one another.

But although the compliments paid to her beauty made but little impression, as they were so common and always anticipated, yet she had been especially well pleased on hearing the following words from the mouth of Victor Mazilier, "*You are a Creole from Louisiana.*"

And this requires an explanation.

In France they use the word *creole* very carelessly, and without understanding its meaning. It is applied indifferently to every inhabitant, whether of our colonies of the Antilles, of Bourbon, of Guiana, or even of certain parts of South America. Only two great classes are recognized: the *negro* and the *creole*. What is not negro must of necessity be creole.

This is an error. In order to have a right to the title of *Creole* in the colonies, it is necessary to be born of white parents and have no mixed blood in the veins. Whatever may be the whiteness of your face, though it rival that of the lily, if your great-great-grandfather was only a

mulatto, and if in going back ten generations a drop of mulatto blood is discovered, you will no longer be called a *Creole*, but simply a man or a woman of color, or in other words, a colored man or woman.

Cora, whose dazzling beauty we have just described, and whose fine soft hair and charming complexion might have excited the envy of the most aristocratic women of Paris, Cora was not a *Creole*, but she was simply a girl of color, *une fille de couleur*. If her genealogy were traced back into the night of time, it would certainly be found that her remote ancestors had black faces and crisped hair. She knew it, and all around her knew it. From her cradle she had been made to feel it. Therefore she must be exceedingly delighted, on her arrival in France, to find herself saluted by the title of *Creole*, so passionately desired.

This flattery was the more acceptable as Victor Mazilier *thought* he was telling the truth. As a citizen of Havre, he was somewhat cosmopolitan. He had had constant intercourse with colonists of all sorts and of all shades. By certain signs, imperceptible to many others, he knew admirably well how to class them as they should be; but the idea would never have occurred to him, on seeing Cora, to doubt the purity of her origin.

Morally, on the contrary, he had made no mistake in regard to her. He had guessed, with the tact of all young men who have lived much in Paris, that the newly arrived young woman could not belong to good society. Did he not know that young America, like old Europe, has her *déclassées* women, and that the New World has for a long time enjoyed the luxury of a *demi-monde*?

"The specimen it sends us is delicious," said he to himself, "Suppose I should appropriate it. Why not? What success should I have at the theatre with this splendid creature! All Havre would be revolutionized! I should receive an ovation in the circle, and the Parisian journals would perhaps speak of me. What a



fine dream! But her traveling companion?—Bah! no passion can resist a forty days' *tête-à-tête* at sea. The moment is favorable; and then I have money. Instead of going to spend it in Paris, I will spend it here. It will last the longer."

It was with such ideas that he approached Cora, and succeeded, after some effort, in causing her to accept his services at the custom-house. The question now was how to be agreeable, to please and to triumph. In our days, young men, and especially rich young men, find no difficulty in so small a matter as this.

## V.

How had George du Hamel been induced to come to France with a woman of color? At what time did their intimacy begin, and how did it originate? Such are the questions which it is important to answer.

George's father, after spending on 'change, in different circles, and on race-courses, the dowry of his wife and a considerable capital received from his family, formed one day the resolution that, instead of vegetating on the theatre of his old exploits, he would go to the United States and endeavor to re-establish his fortune.

America was not then, in an industrial and commercial point of view, so much occupied as it is at the present day. It was not rare for an active man, acquainted with business, to create for himself in a few years a good position in life. The Europeans enjoyed a certain prestige among a people, very intelligent to be sure, but still unexperienced in many respects.

Monsieur Du Hamel carried to the other side of the ocean all the ardor of a man eager to arrive, and desirous to see again as soon as possible his country, wife, and

son, from whom he had been obliged to separate. He ran after fortune with legs already exercised, already broken in the struggle; and he did so well, and ran so fast without regard to fatigue, that fortune, being exhausted and out of breath, little accustomed to the movements of a velocipedist, allowed herself, one fine day, to be caught at the turn of a road.

This rapid course had lasted several years. Monsieur Du Hamel had formed business relations and acquired friends. On election-day they had nominated him as alderman of New Orleans, and he had in this city attachments in all directions.

Finally, gratitude told him it was his duty not to leave a country in which everything had smiled upon him, and return to France, where he had never succeeded in anything but in spending his fortune. He used sometimes to say to himself, that he had left on the other side of the ocean a wife still young, and a son; but, for their interest, was it not preferable that he should continue to augment a fortune which would one day be theirs? He might, it is true, have written to them to join him, but the passage is painful from France to America; the climate of New Orleans is sometimes fatal to Europeans; his son was getting his education at Paris; was it not better that he should finish it there, and that his mother should remain with him to guide him by her counsels? All these reasons induced him to eternize his exile and not make his family share it with him.

But one day his plan of conduct was modified by the following passage contained in a letter from Madame Du Hamel:

"Your son is a splendid horseman. He has realized, physically, all that he promised on your departure. He is tall, well shaped, uncommonly vigorous, thanks to the fencing exercises you recommended to him, with so much reason, in your letters. Morally, you would be delighted with him. He is intelligent, good, and affectionate, and loves you more than you deserve, you ungrateful man! But,—alas! there is a



but after all things,—I fear for him that Parisian life which I cannot prevent his becoming acquainted with, and into which he appears to me to be plunging with all the ardor of his twenty years and the exuberance of a too passionate nature. If his heart is excellent, his brain is a little light, vivacious and rash.

“It has already exposed him to certain dangers which have given me great inquietude. The other day it was a duel, in consequence of a political discussion in a coffee-house of the Latin quarter. Don’t be alarmed, he wounded his adversary, but the poor child himself *might* have been wounded, killed possibly. Ah! my hand trembles at the thought! This duel occasioned some talk. Pray think, a serious duel, with swords, between young men hardly of age! But the law thought it a duty to prosecute our poor George. He escaped by paying a small fine and receiving a reprimand from the judge. It is true he had wounded a deputy, a member of the government. The young man had maintained that everything was going on for the best in the best of empires; and your son, who is not of that opinion, and why I know not, had replied, and hence the duel.

“It would be well if this were all! but no, that duel, it seems, has made George conspicuous in the Latin quarter. There is a crowd of young men there, students in law and medicine, who meet every evening in places they call, I think, *brew-houses*, to discuss or converse upon science, art, social and political economy, which is certainly better, in my opinion, than talking horse, carriage, and actress, as other young men do. But they do not limit themselves to mere talk; they become excited, quarrel, and organize manifestations,—that is, according to the picturesque definition of George, an active fashion or way of informing the government of their opinions and of making them a part of the government itself. The other day the question was about going to the Odeon Theatre to hiss down an actor too friendly

to the government, as they thought; and as they swear now, in the Latin quarter, only by George du Hamel, our son was naturally of the party. The representation was very noisy; they hissed, and hissed, and hissed so much, that the police interfered. Arrests were made. George was collared by a policeman. He freed himself by applying his fist and foot to his aggressor. But he had to deal with a strong party. He was arrested and taken to the police station. Judge what a night I passed: at nine o’clock in the morning he had not returned, and I knew not what had become of him. I had all the difficulty imaginable to extricate him. It was necessary to get your old college companion to interfere,—M. Vernet, who is officiating as attorney-general. Thanks to his influence, George was not brought before the correctional police, but is now under the eye of the prefecture. Some have been kind enough to tell me that he is regarded by the government as a dangerous man! *Dangerous?*—*he*, so good, so generous, so charming!

“All this is very disquieting to me. My life is wasting away in continual anxiety. If George is fifteen minutes behind time for his breakfast, I imagine he is fighting a duel. If at ten in the evening he has not returned, my imagination is excited, my poor head labors, and I soon see him arrested as connected with some serious affair. I cannot go to sleep till he surrounds me with his arms, and says to me with his sweet and gentle voice, ‘Good-night, dear mother, a good night’s rest to you, and call me if you are ill. You know that I am your nurse. Nobody else has a right to take care of you. Come, cover yourself up warm. Wake me in the morning, if you rise first.’

“I beg of you, my husband, send for him to come to you, that you may initiate him into that American life which you call so beautiful, and endeavor to cool his blood and head, and make a man of him. He is still nothing but a child.



"Ah! my tears must flow while making this request,—to think of separating from my George, who is all my joy, all my life!—no more to walk with him arm in arm,—no more to know that he is in his chamber near me,—no more to embrace him when I retire for the night or awake in the morning! What will become of me? I know not. But his happiness before everything! This voyage is necessary, and I ought not to hesitate.

"I don't ask to accompany him at present. The excitements I have experienced for several months have rendered me quite ill, and I could not bear the inconveniences of a long passage. I wait for an answer, my husband. I shall not lack courage when the moment of separation arrives."

Monsieur Du Hamel, after reading this letter, took his pen and replied as follows:

"I am of your opinion, my dear wife; a residence in Paris at this time will not be without danger to George. Send him to me as speedily as possible. I regret that the state of your health will not allow you to follow him, but hope you will be with us soon."

## VI.

AFTER leaving college, and whilst studying law, George felt a strong inclination in the direction of politics. That youthful exuberance which so much alarmed his mother was expended in discussions which sometimes had degenerated into quarrels and manifestations, often perhaps too bold and prominent. But that taste for serious things and great ideas, which agitates our time, those social themes which should interest all youth, and with which only a few young men in the schools and colleges are occupied: that taste, we say, had preserved him from every dissipation and habitual folly.

When once in America, George was

obliged to modify his way of life. The views he took pleasure in sustaining, in France, no longer afforded him any interest. He found, besides, no longer any adversary to contend with; for everybody shared his liberal ideas. It often happened that he found himself in the company of persons much more advanced than himself, and that he was obliged to confess that the liberal of the Latin quarter, in France, was often, in the United States, only a frightful reactionist. Politics, therefore, being out of the question, what was to be done? Should he enter into industrial or commercial business?

He came to the conclusion that it would be wiser to enjoy the fortune that his father had given him, in token of his joy at seeing him once more with him. Having been entirely devoted to his studies, his friends, and his mother, up to the present time, he had not had much chance for amusement. And why should he not have it? Never would he have a better opportunity.

New Orleans, before the war which has depopulated and impoverished it, offered to persons of pleasure the greatest allurements. Pretty women especially seemed to have made it their place of rendezvous. At the French and American theatres, in public balls and in private parties, one could meet with splendid American, Irish, and Creole ladies.

George du Hamel, having been introduced as a Parisian into Creole society, which forms in New Orleans a sort of French colony, was soon made acquainted with the best and the worst phases of it.

Into the one he carried his natural distinction, his charm of manners, and his joyous youth, tempered by an excellent education; into the other all the fire of his twenty-four years, and all the ardor of a passional nature, hitherto restrained, and ready to enjoy its liberty.

But George, during the first years of his residence in New Orleans, whatever follies he might have been guilty of, had been accused of none having a damaging



effect upon his future. He was select, or *eclectic*, in love matters, passing indifferently from blonde to brown, from Irish to American, and from Creole to mulatto.

In the summer his life was passed gayly in some of the houses built on the two banks of the Mississippi. He would spend a month in one, a week in another; always well received and fêted.

The winter saw him, in the day-time, on the promenade leading to Lake Pontchartrain, cantering by the side of some American lady; in the evening enjoying the mazy waltz with a Creole girl; and at night practicing music in a fashionable boarding-house.

The very variety of his affections was his safeguard, and his father, who kept his eye upon him, had no anxiety on his account.

In the third year of his residence in the United States, one evening of December, 18—, George was about to enter the French theatre, of which he was one of the faithful supporters, when a woman who passed before him attracted his attention. He quickened his step, overtook her under the vestibule of the theatre, and was struck with her beauty. Never, since his arrival in New Orleans, had he seen so perfect a creature.

"She cannot be a regular attendant," said he to himself, "as I am not acquainted with her. What place is she going to take, I wonder? I will follow her wherever she goes, though I should lose my orchestra chair."

He approached the *côntroleur* at the same time with the lady.

"I would like to secure a seat in the gallery," said she, timidly, to an employee sitting on an *estrade*.

The employee, instead of taking the money tendered him and giving her a ticket in exchange, gazed at her attentively for a second or two.

"You are joking, doubtless," said he, when he had finished his inspection.

"Why?" asked she.

"You know well that you cannot oc-

cupy a seat in the gallery; your place is in the third row, in the *loges grillées*."

"But, sir——"

"Don't affect to be astonished. Am I not here to prevent colored people from introducing themselves fraudulently into places reserved for white people? We should have a pretty scandal and row in the hall if I had not recognized you. Although Madame Wideman sings to-night *La Favorita*, all the Creole ladies who have hired their boxes would leave the theatre and never set foot in it again. Let us see, will you have a third row box?"

"No," said she, energetically; "if *they* will not have me in the *first* places, I will not take one in the *last*. If it displeases the Creole ladies to sit by me, it displeases me to be in the midst of mulattoes and slaves."

She was going to leave when George advanced.

## VII.

THE few words he had just heard had revived all his youthful remembrances. His liberal ideas of former times, which had lain dormant for three years, resumed their throne in his heart again. The traveler, the stranger, and the seemingly indifferent young man had disappeared as by a miracle, and the student of the Latin quarter was himself again.

"Why do you insult that woman?" said he to the employee of the theatre.

"Why, sir, I do *not* insult her."

"Yes. At all events, you spoke to her with a harshness which nothing can excuse. Now, will you tell me by what right you refuse to her the place she asks for?"

"I have orders not to let enter the women of color, either into the gallery, the first boxes, or the second."

"But the lady cannot be *une fille de couleur*," said George, pointing to her



whose defense he had taken, and behind whom he had taken his stand.

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the employee, politely. "It is possible that a European may be mistaken in her, but I cannot be. A glance is sufficient to enable me to tell the origin of every one. Besides, sir, you must have noticed that this woman did not contradict me. On coming here, she had hoped I should not recognize her, but when I did she did not protest."

That was true; and now again, instead of remonstrating, the person in question lowered her veil and made every effort to retire.

George understood the false position into which he was putting her. From the beginning of this discussion, a large number of the patrons of the theatre formed a circle around the *côntroleur* and endeavored to look out of countenance the young woman who was the cause of all this tumult. She might feel happy to be defended, but preferred, doubtless, not to remain at the side of her defender.

George turned towards her. "Do you wish to enter the theatre, madame?" said he.

"No, sir; I have said that I will not go up to the third row."

"I don't speak to you of the third tier of boxes, I speak of the first gallery. Take my arm, and I will escort you up."

"Oh! oh!" cried several voices in the crowd.

George raised his head and cast a glance over the people surrounding him.

"Yes," said he, "I mean to protest against the usage of which this woman is a victim at this time. It is barbarous, it is ridiculous, and——"

He did not proceed, for his father had just taken him by the arm.

"Hush!" said he to his son, "you are rash, crazy. You are getting into trouble. If you were not known and beloved as you are, you would already have had a quarrel on your hands."

"What do I care for that?" said George.

"It is possible that you care but little. But I care a good deal about it. For I have promised your mother to send you back to France safe and sound. Come, be reasonable. It is a ridiculous, an absurd prejudice, I confess, but deeply rooted in the manners and customs of the country. You cannot expect to abolish it. For the three years you have been living here, have you not become acquainted with it, and have you not had time enough to accustom yourself to it?"

"Yes, I knew it, but by hearsay. Certain places in the French theatre were forbidden to persons of color, I had been told, and I contented myself with shrugging my shoulders. But to-day I have found myself directly at loggerheads with this usage. I have seen put in practice what I had known until the present time only in theory, and I am indignant at it."

"Be indignant as much as you please, but don't *show* your indignation. In traveling, the first duty of a well-educated man is to respect the usages of the countries through which he is traveling. Come, come with me. Thanks to my friends and yours, I hope this affair will have no serious consequences."

George was not entirely convinced. His blood boiled as in the days of the insurrections in the Latin quarter at Paris. Perhaps he would not have followed his father if the person whose champion he was had remained still at his side. But she had adroitly profited by the diversion applied to the affair by the arrival of Monsieur Du Hamel; she had slipped through the crowd and disappeared. The body of the crime, the *corpus delicti*, as they say in the courts, being out of the way, George took his father's arm, entered the theatre, and took his seat in his accustomed place.

Madame Wideman, one of the best artistes New Orleans ever possessed, sang *La Favorita*; and George, like all persons of a nervous and sanguine temperament, as easy to grow calm as to be excited, felt



by degrees his head refreshed and his pulse diminished.

At the end of the first act, entirely refreshed by the music of Donizetti and the voice of his principal interpreter, he had forgotten the little scene which had just taken place.

But he soon perceived that it had made a more vivid and durable impression upon persons of his acquaintance who were in the theatre.

The word had been passed around that a stranger, a Frenchman, George du Hamel, had taken up the defense of a girl of color, and had become indignant against the custom forbidding her taking one of the first places in the theatre, and that he had wished to seat her in the gallery by force.

This conduct on the part of a man to whom New Orleans society had given a favorable reception, and whom it had always treated as one of its own, was commented upon with the greatest severity. The friends of George attempted in vain to defend him. The women especially were the most implacable. Like that Roman lady who used to leave her bath in the presence of her slave, under the pretext that a slave was not a man, the Creole women do not admit that a girl of color is a woman, and that a man of good society can come out in her defense. Since the terrible war which abolished slavery in all the United States, this prejudice is gradually dying out. But at the time we are speaking of, it was in full force, and the most liberal minds could hardly hope that it would ever be extinct.

George was too well acquainted with the world not to perceive the kind of reprobation of which he was the object. The persons he was in the habit of visiting in their boxes between the acts gave him a very cool reception. Ladies in the gallery turned their heads away when he lifted his hat to them; and many young men, with whom he was on good terms the day before, avoided shaking hands with him.

"What ought I to do?" said he to his father, during the time between the acts.

"Nothing. Wait till this unfavorable impression has passed away; but, above all, avoid every kind of quarrel."

"How! Do you really think——"

"I think of nothing in particular; and yet," said he, looking some distance from him, "that meddlesome John de B—— seems to me much excited."

George looked at the man just named to him, and saw that he was talking in a group of young men. Their eyes met; and before Monsieur Du Hamel could get his son away, John de B——, leaving hastily the company in which he was talking, came to George.

## VIII.

JOHN DE B—— had, in New Orleans, a terrible reputation as a duelist. He fought on all occasions, and with or without reason. He would fight a duel on account of a look, a word, a gesture; because he had made a good dinner, or a bad one; because the weather was stormy, or the sky too clear. If your face displeased him, he would come and tell you so; and if you prudently made no reply, he would contend that he was insulted, and send you a challenge. It being decided that there must be a duel in any case, he showed himself very accommodating. All kinds of arms were good in his hands, whether a pistol, sword, gun, sabre, carbine, or revolver. His adversaries might choose their own ground. Everything suited this man, who lived upon the life of others. He accepted with indifference a proposition to fight in the woods, in a field or forest, on a lake, river, or open sea. He was the man who proposed one day to one of his adversaries to fight a duel in a balloon. The combatants were to rise in separate balloons carry a sort of culverine in their respective boats, and fire at each other once in the air. His



adversary refused the proposition, to the great despair of John de B——.

Such was the man who was advancing with evidently hostile intentions towards George du Hamel and his father.

"Sir!" said he, addressing himself to George, when he had reached him.

Monsieur Du Hamel wished to interfere.

"I beg your pardon, father," said George, with firmness; "it is with me that the man seems to have business. I pray you to let me reply to him. But," said George, turning to John de B——, "the place is perhaps ill-chosen for an explanation, and if you will permit it, we will step outside of the theatre."

He was afraid that his father, desirous to prevent a quarrel, would again interfere and render him ridiculous.

"Why go out?" replied John de B——. "What I have to say to you can be summed up in a very few words."

"That is possible. But what I have to say to *you* cannot be. I again propose to you to go out. I will not listen to another word here."

"Ah!" said John, "then——"

He was about to proceed to blows. The Creoles of New Orleans are not talkers, they go direct to their object. John de B—— was evidently in pursuit of a duel. The surest and quickest means of accomplishing his purpose was seriously to insult him whom he had selected for his adversary. But if he was celebrated for his dueling skill, George was no less so for his physical strength. The fancy might take the latter to begin by crushing the hand that might be raised against him, and put therefore his adversary out of condition to fight a duel, before even there was any question about it. But that was not what John de B—— wanted. He consented to kill his man now and then, but did not wish to be flogged.

"Well," said he, suddenly toning down a little, "let us go out."

"I follow you, sir," replied George. "Go on before me, and I will meet you in front of the theatre."

Whilst John de B—— was going out George rejoined his father.

"You have," said he, "followed with your eye the scene that has just taken place, and must have seen that I preserved my temper. I hope to continue to be master of myself, and in order to succeed, I shall not cease for a moment to think of my mother. For her sake I will do almost the impossible, to avoid an encounter with that enraged man. Under the circumstances in which I am, there would not be, even if we were in France, any anxiety to be entertained. But we are in America. I am a Frenchman, and my gentleness, my *longanimité*, or forbearance, cannot go beyond certain limits. The insults that have been given us in a foreign land are not only personal, but have in some measure a national character. *Au revoir*, they are waiting for me. I will be with you again in a moment. Don't be anxious."

John de B——, in company of some young men, was in the street in front of the theatre. When he saw George he joined him.

The latter didn't give him time to begin the conversation. "What did you wish to say to me, sir?" asked George, very calmly, at the same time bowing politely to his adversary.

"I wish to say to you that you were guilty this evening of a great impropriety towards all the Creoles of New Orleans, in assuming the defense of a girl of color, and in appearing to laugh at our usages."

"Have the Creoles of New Orleans commissioned you to be their interpreter to me, and chosen you for their champion?"

"I act on my own account, because your conduct——"

"My conduct you have just mentioned. I have been guilty of an impropriety towards the country which I live in. I am sorry for it, seeing that, until this day, I have received in this country the most cordial hospitality."



"Then you make excuses?"

"To whom? to the country I inhabit? Why, certainly I do, since I have had the misfortune to displease her through ignorance of her usages."

"And do you make any to me?"

"What?"

"Excuses."

"Why, no. You have assured me that you are not the champion of any one."

"Then you fight?"

"With whom?"

"With me."

"Why should I fight with you? I have never done anything to you, and I have nothing to reproach you with."

"And if I should insult you?"

"As you have no cause for insulting me, I should consider you a crazy man, and one does not fight with the insane."

John de B—— made no reply. He turned towards the young men whom he had left in order to talk with George, and cried out to them,—

"Gentlemen, I thank you for having offered me your services; but this man does not fight. He is a coward."

"You have lied in regard to this matter," exclaimed George; "I *do* fight." And springing upon John de B—— he boxed his ears.

Generally the first thing a man does who gets his ears cuffed is to rush upon him who offered the insult. But John de B—— did not move. Only, when several of his friends had come up to him, he said to them,—

"I will kill him to-morrow."

It was evident to every one that the sentence of death had just been pronounced upon George du Hamel.

"What have you been doing, my unfortunate boy?" said his father, on rejoining him a few minutes after.

"What you would have done in my place, if you had been told that you were a coward. And yet I wanted to avoid this duel, I assure you. To conclude, do you think you have courage enough to be one of my seconds?"

"I *must* have that courage," replied Monsieur Du Hamel. "Who better than I can defend your interests!"

They went immediately in pursuit of another second, notwithstanding the late hour of the evening.

## IX.

THE next day, about ten o'clock in the morning, the seconds of John de B—— and those of George du Hamel met in a restaurant in New Orleans Street.

As the idea of settling this sad affair did not for a moment enter the mind of any one, these gentlemen had only to arrange the conditions of the combat.

Which of the adversaries had the choice of weapons? Who was the insulted man? John de B——, who had received a blow, or George du Hamel, who had been treated as a coward? Such was the question presented in the first place, and which might lead to a conflict of opinion.

It was immediately cut short by the seconds of John de B—— declaring, in his name, that he accepted the weapon or weapons of his adversary, provided that the duel about to take place should be a duel unto death.

As soon as these words were uttered, Monsieur Du Hamel, as a father and as a second, remonstrated and protested. All was useless. The instructions of John de B—— were very precise and decided.

"Well, gentlemen," said Monsieur Du Hamel, rising, "the duel shall not take place, and your friend may make the best of his box on the ear. What is it to us? We have been called cowards and have publicly boxed the ears of him who dared thus to insult us. Our honor is satisfied. If yours is not, and you have need of us to repair damages, be more accommodating, and do not come to propose to us a duel which humanity and our duties as seconds oblige us to reject."

"These gentlemen wish for a *first blood*



duel, a duel which shall end when the first drop of blood is spilled, as in France," was the insolent remark of one of John de B——'s seconds.

"No, gentlemen," replied Monsieur Du Hamel, without losing his temper, "the insults are too serious on both sides to be satisfied with a duel such as you speak of. But between a duel unto death and a duel after the French style, which you are pleased to sneer at, there is another, which ends only when one of the adversaries is put *hors de combat*."

"Ah, gentlemen," said the second who had already spoken, "the phrase '*hors de combat*' is quite too vague; it does not satisfy us. A wound in the arm is often sufficient to prevent an adversary from holding his weapon, and then——"

"Then, sir," replied Monsieur Du Hamel, "it is for him whom you represent to be adroit enough not to hit my son in his arm."

"Very well. He shall fire directly at his breast."

"He can do as he pleases, and so can we," said George's father, who could not help turning pale on hearing this threat. He had consented to serve as a second to his son, but the task was a cruel one.

The four seconds discussed the subject a while longer, and ended by deciding that the duel should be fought with swords on the same day, in a sort of *clearing* near Lake Pontchartrain, about two leagues from New Orleans.

George had just finished a long letter to his mother when his father rejoined him.

"Well," said George.

"Get ready; we start in an hour."

"I am all ready."

"Have you any requests to make?"

"Yes; I have one to make to you. If I am killed, I wish you to abandon the interests and affections which you may have here, and go to France to join my mother. By so doing the shock will be less severe to her. I wish you also to give her this letter yourself, which contains my last adieus."

"I solemnly promise to do what you request; but you will not be killed."

"I expect to be, dear father. I count upon it."

He stepped into his room to brush himself up a little, and in half an hour after, with smiling air, calm and cheerful face, and cigar in his mouth, he joined his two seconds in the carriage which they had ordered.

They were about giving orders to the coachman to start, when a negress, who had just crossed the street on the run, sprang to the coach door.

"What do you wish?" asked George.

"I wish you to give this letter to Monsieur George du Hamel."

"I am the man, give it to me."

He unsealed and read as follows:

"A thousand kind wishes from her whom you protected yesterday, and for whom you fight a duel to-day."

"Why," said George, with a smile, "I am not going to fight for her, but for myself."

And, passing the letter to his father:

"By the way," asked George, "do you know that young woman I defended yesterday, and who writes to me to-day? She seemed to me very pretty, but I confess that my other thoughts, since that sad adventure, have made me forget her."

"I received this morning some information in regard to her," replied Monsieur Du Hamel.

"Well, please let me hear."

"But——"

"You think the time ill-chosen, dear father, but you are wrong. For my own sake, you ought to try to amuse me and divert my attention. If we remain silent, I shall be apt to give myself up to the thoughts of France and my dear mother. That would excite me, and you know that coolness is what I especially need at the present time."

Monsieur Du Hamel yielded to this reasoning, and made an effort to subdue his own thoughts and give the information asked for.



"The person in question," said he, "is called Cora, and lives in the upper part of St. Philip Street, in a wooden house of good appearance, by the side of a large garden, wholly planted with flowers. You can see it from here. You have passed it fifty times on horseback."

"Certainly: I see the house very distinctly. But how happens it that I have never seen her who inhabits it? The white women of New Orleans, even women of the best society, are out a great deal in the open air, sit at their windows, and often, in the evening, on the thresholds of their doors; how happens it, then, that a girl of color, (*une fille de couleur*) is invisible, and lives like a recluse?"

"It is exactly because she is a woman of color; she is afraid that her origin may expose her, as it did yesterday, to insults, and she avoids showing herself in public as much as possible."

"She has not then decided to accept the difficulties of her situation?"

"No; she is too pretty, too distinguished, and especially too white."

"You seem to understand her situation well."

"I do. She finds herself superior in beauty and whiteness to the majority of the women in New Orleans, and is enraged at the low position which she occupies. If she were decidedly bronzed or copper-colored, like a mulattress or a quadroon, she would have decided long ago what to do; but no physical difference separating her from the whites, she will never get accustomed to the moral distance which prevents her from associating with them."

"How does she live? Has she any lovers?" asked George.

"Nothing is said about her in that respect, and that is easily explained. She has but one desire in the world, and that is to leave New Orleans and go to live in Europe, where the prejudice from which she suffers does not exist. In order to realize this dream, she is determined to make the best of her beauty and charms,

and induce some one, influenced by them, to take her to France."

"That is not bad reasoning for a girl of color. Has she the means of living, whilst waiting for her chance to leave for Europe?"

"Her mother, who was a very good seamstress, left her a house and a large garden in St. Philip Street. She lives in the house and cultivates the garden, which affords her superb bouquets, that her slaves sell in the market and private houses."

"Ah! has she slaves?"

"Yes, indeed; and she shows herself the more cruel to them, as she herself is a great-great-granddaughter of a slave. It is said that she takes vengeance on these unfortunate creatures for the vexations which white women have made her experience. Especially is this true in regard to two pretty mulatto girls, whom she recently bought at Memphis."

"And it is on account of this amiable creature that I am going to expose my life in a moment!" said George, looking out of the coach-window to see if they were near the place selected for the duel.

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## X.

ON reaching Lake Pontchartrain, the carriage took a narrow road running along the side of the lake, and stopped before a small farm near an orange-grove. That was the spot chosen for the duel. It might be about five o'clock in the afternoon.

George du Hamel, followed by his two seconds, alighted from the carriage.

"Hold! what are all those carriages yonder here for?" asked George.

The seconds looked in the direction indicated, and saw some thirty vehicles, of all forms, scattered here and there on the road, near the farm, and in the neighboring clearing. Saddle-horses, tied to



clumps of trees and watched by negroes, seemed to be waiting for their riders.

"Has your adversary invited his friends to this duel?" said George's father. "But it is against all usage, and I am going——"

"Wait," exclaimed George. "His seconds are coming towards us. We will know what to depend upon."

Being interrogated as to the presence, in the place for the duel, of persons foreign to the affair, the seconds of John de B—— replied that several inhabitants of New Orleans had wished to be present at the encounter that was about to take place, and that they could not prevent it. And besides, the offense having been public, it was thought natural and proper that the reparation should be also.

Monsieur Du Hamel wanted to protest, but George stopped him.

"We are losing our time in useless words," said George. "We can never persuade all those persons to retire: they have come several leagues to see two men slaughter each other, and I should be sorry to deprive them of that little exhibition. Let them come,—let them come near,—and they will learn how a Frenchman fights whom they have dared to treat as a coward!"

Whilst the two seconds were going to inform John de B—— that they were waiting for him, George, turning to his father, said to him, in an animated tone,—

"I am delighted at this little incident; it has stirred up my blood and irritated my nerves. I was too calm. It seems to me now that I am going to fight with more vigor. Look! look!" added he, "the spectators are approaching. See those just getting out of their carriages. There are others yonder just coming out of the woods. They are more numerous than I thought."

Suddenly he took his father's arm, exclaiming,—

"God bless me! there are also *women* among them. Ah, this is too bad! Had I been told this would take place, I could

not have believed it. Women—and women of the first class, as I see—present at a duel! Decidedly, in many respects, these Americans are still half-savages."

George was not mistaken. Several Creole ladies of New Orleans—among whom one might have noticed two or three young girls—had ventured to appear on the ground chosen for this duel, as in France they go to the race-course. They were going to pass their judgment on the *hits*, probe the wounds with eyes, and be present at the dying struggle of one of the two combatants.

And let not the reader believe that, in order to make our recital more picturesque and striking, we invent certain details at pleasure. Our imagination has nothing to do here; we have recourse only to personal recollections. If we believe it a duty, in order to respect certain proprieties, to change sometimes a proper name or abridge it,—if we happen often to displace purposely the locality of the scene,—we can at least affirm that the substratum or base of our recital is most scrupulously exact. Would it not be culpable to resort to invention or fiction, when the plain statement of facts would answer the same purpose?

The two adversaries and their four seconds, accompanied by their physician, entered the little orange-grove of which we have spoken, and soon found there an open space or clearing, well adapted to an encounter with swords. Gradually, while the combatants were getting ready and the seconds were arranging the details, the curious, who had hitherto kept at a proper distance, silently approached, and formed a circle around the principal actors in this scene.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" asked one of the seconds of John de B——, addressing himself to the two combatants at the same time.

They responded in the affirmative, and took the swords that were handed to them.



Then they were placed opposite each other, swords were crossed, and, in the midst of profound silence, these words were pronounced by the seconds,—

“Ready, gentlemen!”

The combat was begun, and the curtain was raised for the spectators, who immediately perceived that they were going to witness a very *interesting* struggle. For the combatants seemed to be of equal strength and endowed with the highest degree of coolness or self-command.

John de B—— began by a vigorous attack. George contented himself with parrying, intending to profit by the moment when his adversary should leave himself exposed, so that he might attack him in his turn; but John de B—— committed no blunder. His close play, his sword as prompt to defend as to attack, allowed of no surprise.

At the end of about three minutes, the seconds ordered a suspension of the combat.

George profited by this moment of rest to exchange a few words with his father, who, pale and silent, stood by his side, ready to give assistance in case of need.

“Don’t tremble so, father,” said George, in an under-tone. “He is a first-rate fencer, as you see, but I believe I understand his play. I would give anything in the world,” added he, pressing his father’s hand, “to have this duel prove no more fatal to him than to me.”

As to John de B——, he was exchanging smiles and salutations with the spectators, and seemed to say to them, “Wait, I beg your pardon for not having yet arrived at any result, but you will lose nothing by waiting.”

The combatants resumed their places, and swords were crossed again. This time it was George who made the attack, and with so much vigor that John de B—— was obliged to break up. He drew back thus some ten steps, and then at the moment when George was expecting to see him still retreat, and was preparing to press him more closely, he suddenly

stopped, uttered a yell to intimidate George, and gave him a thrust direct.

If George had been unguarded, or, in the phrase of the fencer, *uncovered*, all would have been up with him. But his arm, which he had had time to bend back, served him as a shield, and was pierced through and through by the sword.

In every other case, this wound would have been considered a fortunate one; for it presented an apparent gravity which might largely satisfy those interested; it would not endanger life, and would necessarily end the fight. But here, with an angry man like John de B——, it served only to establish an immense disproportion between the strength of the two combatants. Indeed, when George’s seconds declared that the duel could not go on, John de B—— replied in a burst of laughter.

And when they insisted upon what they had said:

“Are you joking,” exclaimed he, “in wishing to stop the duel on account of a wound in the arm? To think of satisfying me with a scratch, when I want his life, would be ridiculous indeed!”

And addressing himself to George, whose physician was examining his wound,—

“I am waiting for you, sir,” said he, “and I count upon you.”

The circle of spectators had formed more closely around the combatants. John de B——, still holding in his hand his sword dripping with blood, went off to talk with those nearest to him.

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## XI.

In a short time George’s seconds rejoined those of John de B——, and Monsieur Du Hamel said,—

“Gentlemen, the physician declares that it is absolutely impossible for my son to hold his sword. In passing through his arm, the sword of his antagonist struck a



nerve, which has produced a degree of paralysis; and we are therefore obliged——”

He was not able to finish; for John de B——, disregarding the custom which forbids adversaries to take any part in the conversation of the seconds, had just advanced.

“If your son,” cried he, addressing Monsieur Du Hamel, “cannot use his right arm, let him use his left, and let that end the matter.”

George had heard what was said, and in his turn advanced and said to John de B——:

“Do you wish me to do that?”

“*Diable!* do I wish it? It is *you* who seem to be unwilling to try the experiment.”

“My wound was thought severe enough to satisfy your wounded honor. But *you* do not think so! You desire my life. Very well! Take it if you can.”

He quickly picked up his sword with his left hand, and brushing aside the seconds who wished to stop him, put himself on guard.

The combat was not so disproportionate as one might think. Certain Parisian fencing-masters, foreseeing the case in which their pupils might find themselves sword in hand in front of a left-handed man, accustom them to fence indifferently with the right hand and with the left. George, who had been a long time at their school, was therefore prepared to contend with his adversary.

The duel recommenced, terrible and furious on both sides. The animosity of John de B——, the presence of all those spectators, some of whom by their gestures, attitudes, and exclamations, manifested clearly the interest they felt in their fellow-countryman; finally, his wound, from which he suffered cruelly, had ended by exasperating George du Hamel. He was decided, if he could, to give a lesson to that terrible duelist, who had to reproach himself with the death of several persons.

As to John de B——, he owed it to his reputation as a skillful fencer to dispatch with the greatest possible speed that man, already wounded and compelled to fight out the duel with his left hand.

But he soon perceived that what he thought a disadvantage to his adversary gave him, on the contrary, a great superiority. George handled his sword with a surprising dexterity, whilst John de B——, who had never found himself fencing with a left-handed man, was entirely thrown out of his bias or reckoning; his play was no longer followed by the same effects; his best-adjusted thrusts failed to accomplish their object, and for a moment he was surprised to find that he parried with less ease those made by his opponent.

Then that man, endowed with such a terrible coolness when he thought he had an advantage over his adversary, lost his self-command as soon as he saw the superiority which this change of hand had given George. He forgot in an instant all the principles and all the rules which form the basis of fencing, and used his sword just as a mere beginner would have done.

At the same time, the feeling of his lack of power and of the danger he was in augmented his wrath. He uttered furious cries and made terrible leaps; but every time he threw himself forward he encountered the sword of George, pointing directly at his body, and immovable. Indeed, George, for awhile, disdained to attack, and contented himself with parrying, without even carrying his arm forward, using only a simple movement of his hand. Whilst John de B—— was losing his *sang-froid*, that of George returned to him. One might have imagined him in a fencing-hall.

He thought now that this show might as well be ended, and having decided to inflict no mortal wound upon his adversary, he endeavored to deal him a blow which would put him *hors du combat*. He hit him without effect in his arm,



shoulder, and thigh. The sword of John de B—— seemed sealed or riveted to his hand. Pain was powerless to make him relinquish it. But all these thrusts that he could not parry, and the blood which he felt running from his wounds, had made him insane. His cries had in them nothing human. His eyes protruded from their orbits, and he foamed at the mouth.

Suddenly, a gleam of reason returned. He recovered, as by enchantment, that skill in fencing which had for a long time made him so terrible and so much to be feared. He tied with wonderful address the sword of his adversary, and threw himself violently upon him. But his arm met nothing but space, while his body, thrown violently forward, was precipitated upon the sword of George.

He fell without uttering a cry. The sword had penetrated his abdomen and struck the vertebral column, passing through the lower *vena cava*.

The attention of the physician was useless. Five minutes after, John de B—— breathed his last.

Then there was great commotion among the spectators of this bloody drama. All approached and wished to take a last look at the man who had acquired so sad a celebrity. They refused to believe in his death. They asked themselves the question if he would not suddenly rise, seize his sword, and rush again upon his adversary.

What! could that be the elegant, the charming and terrible John de B——?

He who had for so long a time lived, as it were, *on* duels, died at last *in* a duel. A single sword-thrust was sufficient to overthrow that giant of strength and skill.

Had the interest which he inspired brought together all those spectators on the field of combat? No. The feeling of curiosity influenced the largest number of them. Terrible emotions or excitements always have a charm for certain persons. Others wished to please John de B——, by coming to admire his courage and skill; and they were so much

afraid of him, that he had at New Orleans his flatterers and his court.

Was he regretted and mourned for by some? It is possible. His implacable pride, beauty, youth, and high deed of arms must have touched the hearts of some. One is induced to believe it, because, after the duel, several female spectators had the courage to approach the spot where he had fallen and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, a thing unheard of before, and which we would not dare affirm if we had not seen it.

As to George, without even wishing to have his bleeding arm cared for, he took as soon as possible the carriage that brought him. With the exception of his seconds, no one accompanied him, and no one dared to protest against what had just taken place. Should people in America compliment a Frenchman for having killed an American? and on the other hand, could they blame him for having loyally and generously fought his duel?

After taking his seat in the carriage, his nerves, for so long a time overstrained, suddenly relaxed; and the man so brave,—who, since the day before, had shown no sign of weakness,—burst into tears like a child.

“I have killed him! I have killed him!” exclaimed he, in his despair.

“No, you did *not* kill him,” said his father, taking him by the hand. “You did, on the contrary, everything to spare him. It was he who threw himself on your sword.”

But no reasoning could assuage his grief.

On arriving at New Orleans, he had a violent fever, caused by his moral and physical sufferings. He took his bed, and for some time gave serious apprehensions to his friends. But his wound, which was at first considerably inflamed, soon began to cicatrize. His calm state of mind gradually returned, and his youth triumphed over all the dangers which had threatened him.



On his first going out, he found on the threshold of his door the negress who handed him a note from Cora at the moment he was starting for the battleground.

This time, also, she handed him a letter.

George repelled her. This Cora was odious to him. Was it not on her account that he had fought the duel, had been wounded, dangerously sick, and had been led to kill John de B——?

But the negress lifted upon him a suppliant look, and said,—

“If I do not carry back an answer, my mistress will beat me.”

Through pity and curiosity,—perhaps because he suddenly remembered the charming features of Cora,—he took the letter, and read these words,—

“It is absolutely necessary that I should speak with you. Pray come and see me.”

He reflected a moment, and said to the negress,—

“Very well, I will call to-morrow.”

### XIII.

PERHAPS, some weeks later, George would not have thought of keeping his promise to Cora. Soirées, theatres, balls, concerts, and promenades would then occupy all his time. But, for more than a month confined to his room by the order of his physician, he had not had a glimpse of any gracious countenance, and his best remembrances, assailed by fever and suffering, had gradually vanished. Sickness had in some degree blotted out his past life, and he was, so to speak, being born again, and another life was opening before him.

It seemed to him that his nature had become milder, and that his heart had new aspirations. Since his arrival in America he had thought only about

amusements and living as fast as possible; but now he had a desire for calm pleasure, sweet and pure joys. He would like to have some one by his side to love, some one to whom he could devote himself. His imagination, head, and senses had spoken up to the present time; the heart was now beginning to raise its gentle voice and claim its rights.

In this frame of mind, deprived of all vivid remembrances, he could not help pitying that Cora, that poor girl of color, whose life a barbarous prejudice had made so sad, who was living alone, neglected, far from the world she loved, far from the pleasures to which her youth and beauty seemed to invite her.

Like her, and for having espoused her cause too publicly, he had become a sort of pariah. The majority of the drawing-rooms which had been so graciously opened to him formerly were now to be shut against him. The papers which he had read during his convalescence did not consider it criminal, his having killed John de B——, for they acknowledged he did all he could to spare his life, but his having by his conduct laid John de B—— under the necessity of calling him to account.

“If Monsieur George du Hamel,” said the *New Orleans Bee*,—a paper edited by Creole young men,—“had not forgotten his duties to us,—if, in contempt of the laws of hospitality, he had not risen against our most deeply rooted and respectable usages,—we should not have to mourn to-day for the death of one of our fellow-countrymen and one of our friends.”

Thus, in spite of his generous conduct on the ground, and his wound, which had put his life in danger, he had not been forgiven. His friends and acquaintance had forsaken or avoided him.

Ah! but he would manage to show them that he could do without them, and create for himself new associations. He would not return immediately to France,



as his father had, at one moment, advised. That would be misinterpreted, and pass for a flight. People would not fail to accuse him of wishing to avoid just reprisals, and of fearing that some friend of John de B—— might call him to account. No! he would remain in New Orleans, live there as he pleased, and brave public opinion. The public had been unjust to him, but he would show himself insensible to its injustice. And if his old friends should wish some day to court and flatter him as formerly, he would repel all their advances, and eternize himself in his solitude.

Together with these moral considerations, there were others which urged him towards the blooming garden of St. Philip Street. Since Cora had written him for the second time, he saw again, in imagination, that splendid creature whose beauty had for a moment dazzled him. Was it indeed the girl of color he had wished to protect? In his life of dissipation and pleasure, had he not forgotten his generous ideas of former days and his liberal aspirations? Had he not simply taken up the defense of a beautiful young woman in order to attract her attention and win her good graces? She seemed now ready to grant them and to reward him for having fought a duel on her account. Why, then, should he not profit by these kind feelings and marks of sympathy? They would be a compensation for the hostility shown him. His isolation would cease, and he would find, perhaps, in Cora the new emotions which his heart yearned for.

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### XIII.

AND, in fact, he did find them.

Never did woman inspire, perhaps, a passion so sudden, and yet so serious and violent. And never was woman physically more perfect, or took greater pains

to please. The youth and manly grace of George, the charms of a cheerful and already thoughtful mind, his conduct towards her, his bravery and generosity witnessed and applauded by so many spectators, the kind of celebrity which his duel had given him,—all these things united, did they really captivate her? did she love all at once, as she was loved, sincerely and without a secret end in view?

Or did she rather make only an adroit calculation? Did she think she had found in George the only man who could in New Orleans brave the prejudice from which she was suffering, and dare to expose himself for her? Did she see especially in him a foreigner, who, at no distant period, would necessarily return to Europe with her, and make her finally the equal of all those white women who despised her so much?

However this might be, it is certain that, in order to attach George to herself, she had recourse to all the seductions of woman, known and unknown, down to her day.

She began at first the conquest of his heart, by making herself yielding, amiable, gracious, devoted, sentimental, and tender. She had a charming timidity, virginal modesty, and the *abandon* of refined poetry. Her warmest caresses had all the chasteness of legitimate love.

She was careful to make herself useful, necessary, and indispensable. She lavished upon him thousands of attentions of which a mother and a loving sister alone have the secret. She took pleasure in making him acquainted with all the deep and pure joys of which he had been deprived for three years. She fondled, indulged, and pleased him in every way as one would a favorite child.

Then, when she felt that she was absolute mistress of his heart, and that she had attached him to her by powerful bonds, she undertook to conquer forever his imagination and senses. She dismissed at once her timidity and modesty,



which had become useless, and boldly exposed her splendid personal advantages.

Thanks to her exuberant nature, her exalted imagination, and that corruption which seems to be innate in girls of color, and which renders them so dangerous, she was enabled to use all those refinements in the art of love which antiquity has bequeathed to us, and employed them as a means of seduction.

And when he was completely subdued, and she saw that she had attached him to herself by indissoluble ties,—that he had lost consciousness of individuality and strength,—that she could desire everything, order everything,—then, as her task was finished, as she was now sure of her future, she resumed possession of herself, silenced her heart-beatings, and coldly exercised her authority.

Finally the girl of color, disdained, despised, and driven from public places, had a *white* man for a slave; a slave whom she could torture at her ease, without interference from the police, and upon whom, if the fancy took her, she could inflict punishment more horrible than any experienced under the whip-lash, and upon whom she could take revenge for her abasement and shame; a slave whom all the abolitionists in the United States could neither emancipate nor steal from her.

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#### XIV.

WHAT we have said of the dazzling beauty of Cora, of her ability to play all parts with unusual talent, of her amatory science pushed to the utmost limit, of that cold and implacable will with which she was endowed, and which she could direct towards one sole object, sufficiently explains the sway which she in a short time obtained over George du Hamel.

We ought not to forget that he was then in his twenty-fourth year, at that time of life when the passions are the strongest,

and when man has not yet acquired the experience necessary to battle with them. He was in love also for the first time, and with the confidence of an excellent heart and all the illusions of youth.

And yet he did not agree at once and without protest to the demands made upon him. He endeavored to resist the despotism under which Cora delighted to crush him. He had his moments of anger, indignation, and revolt. But all this went for nothing. The able conqueror who had reduced him to slavery exercised her tyranny only after assuring herself of her power, and becoming certain that all rebellion would immediately be suppressed.

During the first six months of their acquaintance, when Cora had not yet established her dominion, and was only laying the foundation of it, and endeavoring to conquer George's heart by her grace and kindness, he was astonished more than once at the quite patriarchal manner in which she ruled her household.

Had not people asserted that she maltreated her slaves, and avenged herself on them for the false position in which her origin placed her? and that she especially exercised her tyranny over two pretty mulatto girls, whose olive complexion constantly reminded her that her own grandmother had possessed the same physical disadvantages?

How she had been calumniated! She, who spoke to her servants with so much kindness and gentleness!

Everybody seemed happy in that pretty habitation of St. Philip Street. Thousands of flowers in the garden smiled in the sun, and slaves smiled in the presence of their mistress.

Had not people gone so far as to say that these two young mulatto girls, whom she went herself to buy in the Memphis slave-market, and had selected with great care, had been trained for a long time to her purposes and destined to render her solitude less painful?

Ah, how they misunderstood her! and



how well George could answer to the contrary!

One day, however, George had just entered the garden by a gate opening on the street, and was proceeding towards the house, when it seemed to him that he heard cries. He stopped and listened.

There was no mistake. The cries were repeated; they came from the house, and were the cries of a woman.

His first thought was that some accident had happened to Cora. He ran to the house, opened one door, then another, and stopped, struck with astonishment.

In the middle of the saloon, pale, cold, and implacable, Cora, with the whip in her hand, was lashing the naked shoulders of one of her mulatto girls. The young girl, on her knees, was sobbing and uttering the most heart-rending cries.

"Wretched woman! what are you doing?"

"What I please," replied Cora, not disconcerted at being thus surprised, and letting her whip fall again upon the shoulders of the mulattress.

"Stop!" said he, rushing forward.

"No; she has refused to obey me, and I have condemned her to receive twenty lashes; she shall have them."

"I ask your pardon for her."

"You have begun too late," said she; "this is the twentieth blow, and the count is full." And addressing herself to the girl, she added:

"Now go; if you repeat the offense, you know what awaits you."

When they were alone, George, upon whom this scene, unexpected and new to him, had made a painful impression, could not conceal from Cora his surprise and indignation.

"Is she not my slave," said she, "and have I not the right to strike her?"

"No; you have no such right. You may send her to the prison and cause her to be whipped, but you are forbidden by the police regulations to whip her yourself."

"Are you a policeman?"

"No; but——"

"Then mind your own business."

"Why, how you speak to me——"

"If my tone and manner don't suit you, you are not obliged to listen to me. I will not detain you."

"Very well; I leave," said he.

He went towards the door, with the idea that she would call him back.

She made no motion, and said not a word. He left.

When in the street, he expected for a long time that she would send after him. He turned around several times, thinking some one called him. Not so.

He returned home and waited for a letter, but no letter came.

At ten o'clock in the evening, unable to hold out any longer, he started for St. Philip Street.

He found Cora swinging in her hammock, and the girl she had beaten in the morning gently rocking her.

"Ah, is that you?" said she, with indifference, and without even raising herself up.

"Cruel girl!" exclaimed he, "how you have made me suffer!"

"Why didn't you return sooner?"

"I was expecting a word from you,—I was hoping——"

"You would have waited a long time. I never yield. You must yield to me. You have due notice. Hereafter, when I shall flog my slaves, you will have the politeness to look at me in silence."

"Never!"

"I have a good mind to try it. I will bet you would remain, you would be so much afraid of passing a night like the day that has just passed. Noun," said she, addressing her mulatto girl, who stood listening with terror, "go and get my whip; I have not been pleased with you; you deserve another whipping."

The girl obeyed. She knew, from long experience, that Cora could not be disobeyed with impunity.

"Now," continued she, still carelessly stretched at length in her hammock, "down on your knees."



Then turning to George :

"Come, start yourself, for I am going to whip her. But I wish you to understand that my door will be shut against you for eight days."

"I remain," said he; "but pray spare that girl."

"Be it so. But remember, no more of your remarks, no more resistance, and no more revolt. Ought you not to obey me?" added she, leaning towards him and caressing with one of her most languishing looks, "am I not your mistress?"

Noun, overjoyed, went and put the whip in its well-known place, and hastened to leave the room, for fear that some new fancy might get possession of her mistress.

This evening was the more agreeable, as the forenoon had been so unpleasant and agitated. With a woman like Cora, the reconciliation that follows a quarrel is always delicious. In the intoxication of remembrance, George did not even think, on the next and following days, of drawing any inference from what he had learnt about Cora.

But some time after, when she became completely developed morally, when he was obliged to yield to evidence, and no illusion in regard to her was any longer possible, he satisfied himself with uttering these words, so often pronounced by all unfortunate men, whom passion rules, and who have no longer a consciousness of their cowardice or weakness: "What is to be done? I cannot do without her."

Soon she took pleasure in torturing him in his love, and rendering him jealous even to delirium.

She did not go so far as to deceive him, she was too shrewd to commit such a fault. She knew that in the exercise of tyranny one must know how to stop within certain limits. There are punishments which the most docile and submissive slave cannot endure. He suddenly rebels. A flash is seen in his eye, which seemed asleep, he breaks his chains and smites his master.

If Cora was too hard upon him, if she dared make him experience one of those insults which an honorable man cannot endure, George could free himself from his weakness, shun the house of the unfaithful, and in order to be no more tempted to return to it, could suddenly leave New Orleans by one of the numerous ships which America sends every day to Europe.

Then she would never see that France so much desired, and which he had promised to make her acquainted with! She would no more see him, whom she loved, perhaps.

But, without deceiving him, she knew how to inspire him with a thousand fears and keep his jealousy constantly on the alert.

One evening, as they were walking along New Orleans Street, and had stopped in front of a gunsmith's shop, she suddenly said to him,—

"Buy me a revolver."

"What will you do with it?" asked he, smiling.

"I will tell you hereafter. Buy it."

When they had returned to the house in St. Philip Street, she loaded her revolver, put it on the mantel-piece, and said to George,—

"This fire-arm is destined for you. It shall never leave me. I shall carry it with me to France; and if it should ever happen to you to deceive me, I will blow your brains out!" added she, with a smile.

He swore he would run no risk, and thought that pleasantry very original.

This voyage to France, so often mentioned between them, and which was to take place during the first months of their acquaintance, was retarded by a long illness of Monsieur Du Hamel.

He had to pay to the yellow fever the tribute demanded of every European, sooner or later, who settles in certain parts of America.

It seized him with extreme violence. He did not succumb to the first attack, but he could never entirely recover.



He continued to grow weaker every day, and, after a long suffering, died in the arms of his son.

Having settled his father's affairs, George, whom nothing retained any longer in America, but whom, on the contrary, everything invited to France, embarked with Cora on board the Zurich.

In the first chapters of this story we have seen him arrive at Havre and shut himself up in a room of the Admiralty Hotel, whilst Cora, who had already made a conquest of the son of a ship-owner in Havre, Victor Mazilier, was going with this young man towards the custom-house buildings.

## XV.

VICTOR MAZILIER had shown Cora into one of the halls of the custom-house, and while waiting till his companion should be called to open her trunks, he endeavored to amuse and bewilder her by a sample of his most fantastic conversation.

"So, madame," said he, in that nice and pretentious tone which was peculiar to him, "you only cross Havre? But allow me to tell you that with the exception of Paris Street and the landing-places, which are rather animated, Havre is a provincial town like all the rest, and I abhor a province. But you might spend a couple of weeks or so here, without being very much displeased. There are some ten or a dozen of us young men here, of good families, who would take great pleasure in offering you any number of amusements while you remain."

"I have no doubt of it," replied Cora, with a smile; "but——"

"But you prefer to go to Paris. That is what I regret on your own account. If we were in the month of January, I should approve of your preference, and should even ask permission to leave you for a moment, in order to run home and put some thousand-franc bills in my

pocket-book, and order my servant to pack my valise."

"And what for?" asked Cora.

"In order to follow you, to be sure! Do you think that, after seeing you, I should consent to leave you? It is impossible."

She wished to interrupt him, but he continued:

"I said I should approve of your leaving for Paris, if we were in the month of January; but we are in the month of June, the hottest part of the year, and nobody leaves Havre, where we enjoy, thanks to the sea, a temperate climate, in order to go to Paris, which is a furnace. It would be in very bad taste. My friends of the *circle* would not pardon it in me. They would say, 'Where, pray, is Mazilier?' 'He has left for Paris.' 'Indeed? It is incredible; he has no longer any respect for himself; he is bound to lose his reputation as a gentleman.' Such are the remarks that would be made about me; and you understand well, madame,—and, by the way, while I think of it, ought I to say *madame* or *mademoiselle*?"

"Madame," replied Cora.

"And you understand, *madame*," continued young Mazilier, flourishing his cane in his habitual style, "that I would not wish to run the risk of producing so bad an impression."

"But, sir, I don't ask you to accompany me," said Cora.

"Very true, you don't ask it. But allow me to say, that if I wished to follow you, I should not be so foolish as to consult you about it. I would take the same train with you, would get into the same car, and would offer you a *couverture de voyage*, which—you would refuse, and—what is the use of saying all that? I cannot go to Paris at present, and you are not to go."

"How! I am not—who will prevent it?"

"You will abandon the idea yourself. You must learn, madame, that Paris is not *in* Paris in the month of June; in other words, Paris is *not at home* in that



month. It is at the springs, the sea-bathing places, and in the country generally. A charming woman like you,—a woman who respects herself,—waits till winter in order to make her first appearance in elegant and fashionable life. Whom will you meet there at this season of the year? I ask you. It is only the common people, the counting-room and lawyers' clerks, and such as are obliged to remain there. You will not know whom to speak to. It is my duty to give you some instruction on this subject. You are fresh from America; you are not acquainted with the usages of our country; my good star has caused me to fall in with you, and I find you adorable, charming, and——"

"It seems to me that some one is calling for me to open my trunks," said Cora.

"No, no; don't trouble yourself about that; you will be informed in time. Havre," continued he, with the same *aplomb*, while pursuing his idea and looking at Cora from the corner of his eye to see what effect he was going to produce,—"Havre is at this time as full and as animated as Paris is deserted. Yes, the hotels are swarming with the elegant and the rich, the millionaires. Why, at the European Hotel, where I breakfasted this morning, there were two members of the Jockey Club and several bankers of the first class. One would not find so many between the Elysian Fields and Peletier Street. But what we lack here, you know, is pretty women. Now and then, one, here and there, it is true, is to be met with, and that is all. So we are disposed to do all the silly things in the world in order to——"

He was fortunately interrupted right in the midst of this sentence, which threatened to be a little too clear. An officer of the custom-house came to inform Cora that there remained only her baggage to be examined.

Victor Mazilier hastened to follow her. On his way he congratulated himself on his perspicacity.

"I was not mistaken," said he to himself. "She is one of the numerous women whom America sends over to us every year. She comes to seek a fortune in France; and as the passage is costly, and she had need of a traveling companion, she fell in love with some brave young man whom her beautiful eyes had led astray. But now she is in port; and a person well-situated and good-looking, like myself for example, who should pay attention to her, would stand a good chance to supplant the traveling companion."

This reasoning was not absolutely false, it was only exaggerated.

In the first place, Cora, before leaving New Orleans, had sold her house in St. Philip Street, her garden, her slaves, her old negro, negress, and her two mulatto girls. She had realized from this sale a considerable sum, with which she bought drafts to carry with her; and thanks to this little fortune, her conquest was not so easy as Victor Mazilier would have liked to believe.

And then, secondly, she had not decided to abandon George du Hamel, to whom mysterious affections bound her still. And were not, moreover, the most of her plans for the future based upon the unfortunate passion with which she had inspired that young man?

But she was not decided to love him exclusively, as she had done at New Orleans.

France was, for her, a sort of *promised land*, where she hoped to enjoy of every kind of pleasure. Beautiful, young, seductive to the utmost, sufficiently intelligent, as morally corrupt as the most immoral could desire, without prejudices and without scruples, ready for all sacrifices that could be turned to her account, she was prepared to aim at any object she wished to accomplish, and in most cases to command success.

At sunset, under the orange-trees of her garden, indolently reclining in her hammock, rocked by one of her pretty mulattresses and fanned by the other, she could not help indulging in sweet reveries, and



in seeing herself installed some day in Paris, the city of all wonders, in a rich apartment, with gilt ceiling and wainscoting; when a splendid carriage would be waiting for her in the street to take her to the woods of Boulogne!—that place which all women beyond the ocean talk about and seem to grudge us, although they have virgin forests at their doors.

She would arrive at the woods drawn by blood-horses,—would exchange salutations and smiles with men of fashion, with rich and fashionable women, with *white* women. In the evening she would take her place in the Italian theatre, or at the opera, in a first-class box, she who, up to the present time, had witnessed theatrical exhibitions only in the third row.

In order to realize completely this fine dream, it was not sufficient to be in France, it was necessary to be rich and arrive at that degree of genteel celebrity which certain women so ardently desire.

The officiousness and civility of Victor Mazilier had not been unappreciated by Cora. From her first step on the soil of France, and her first glance cast upon the crowd, a man who appeared to be well educated, and said that he was rich, was eager to come to her aid if she needed it. It was a *début*, or beginning, full of promise for the future. She confessed to herself even, that her new companion expressed himself well, and that his propositions deserved serious attention. Paris, said he, was deserted in the month of June, and it was in bad taste to live there. Why, then, did George wish to take her there? It was, no doubt, to shut her up in some small furnished room, and to profit by the fact that she would have no acquaintance with others, and to overwhelm her with his love. Would it not be preferable for her to remain some weeks in Havre, in the open air, in company with the young ship-owner and the amiable capitalists of whom he had spoken?

## XVI.

At the same time she was indulging in these reflections, Cora was pointing out her baggage for the investigations of the custom-house. Victor Mazilier, standing by her side, cast a glance into the bottom of the trunks, which the officers of the custom-house, without paying any regard to his recommendations, were rummaging over with a zeal and conscience quite remarkable.

"*Diable, diable!*" said Victor to himself, "what a quantity of linen she has, and how well off she must be! Her conquest might present some difficulties."

When Cora had finished showing her own trunks, it was necessary to think of those of George, as he had put them under her charge and she had the keys.

"Ah!" said Victor again to himself, "the view changes. Petticoats are succeeded by waistcoats, and robes by dress-coats. These belong to the traveling companion. Let us see if he is conveniently rigged out with everything."

Victor stood tiptoe in order to see, and to the great displeasure of Cora, who tried in vain to distract his attention from the trunks.

"Lots of cravats, linen shirts, embroidered handkerchiefs, a magnificently furnished toilet-case, a glove-box from Tahan's. Decidedly, it will be necessary for me to go to considerable expense in order to succeed him. But, for a woman like this, I am ready for any sacrifice; and, in case of necessity, I would even ruin my father."

When the custom-house inspection was over, Victor, still busy and civil, ordered the baggage to be put in a hand-cart, and inquired of Cora her address.

"Right opposite; India Hotel," replied she.

And while following the baggage to the hotel, Victor, seeing the time when his companion would escape him, made desperate efforts to retain her.

"Madame," said he, "you will not



leave me thus? you will not quit Havre without at least having visited it? After all I have told you about Paris, you will not go to live there at this season of the year?"

She turned around and answered him bravely,—

"You well know that I am not traveling alone. You have had a chance to see that one half of these trunks are not mine."

He thought he *ought* to appear astonished.

"Indeed!" said he. "To whom do they belong?"

"To a person who came from New Orleans with me."

"And does he abandon you thus on the moment of your landing, in a country you are unacquainted with? Pray is he sick?"

"On the contrary, he is perfectly well."

"Then, does he not love you?"

"Oh, yes," murmured she.

The tone in which these two words were pronounced was sufficient to give to Victor an idea of the state in which Cora's heart was. It was evident to him that she was attached to her traveling companion only by very feeble ties.

"Would it be improper," said Victor, encouraged by the tone of Cora's answer to the question just put to her, "would it be indiscreet, to ask of you the name of the person we are speaking of?"

"What is the use?" said she; "you cannot be acquainted with him."

"It is very probable that I am, on the contrary. My father's ships go often to New Orleans; I am very intimate with the captains who command them, and they keep me well posted up about everything which takes place there. And besides, dear madame, it is very easy for me to get a list of the passengers of the Zurich."

"You need not be at that trouble," said she; "the name of my *compagnon de voyage* is George du Hamel."

"George du Hamel—wait—I know that.—Why, yes, I am not mistaken.

He is a Frenchman. I have heard a good deal said about him. Under what circumstances?—It was about a duel, if I am not mistaken—a duel with—that's it, I've got it. He fought a duel with a Creole of New Orleans, and killed him. Ah, yes, I know all about him. He has been much talked of about here, and there has been many a dispute on his account. Some said that he was wrong, others maintained that he was right. But I argued that he was in the wrong, because a man of the world, a gentleman, never fights a duel on account of a *fille de couleur*, or girl of color. Is not that your opinion, madame?"

"Exactly," said Cora, boldly.

These words of Victor Mazilier, far from hurting her feelings, were only a new and unexpected compliment to her art and address. They proved that he had not the least suspicion of her origin.

But what did she care now for what might be said for or against women of color, or women *supposed* to have a few drops of African blood in their veins, and those perhaps derived from a great-great-grandmother, as in her case? For since she landed in Europe she was no longer a part of that despised and unfortunate race; and if she was, nobody knew it, and no one would suspect it either from her manners or her looks.

"Ah, ah!" resumed Mazilier, "that is the famous George du Hamel,—a handsome fellow, I have been told,—but without great elegance, without—I beg pardon," said he, checking himself, "my frankness is carrying me too far, and I am afraid I may displease you."

"Pray go on," said she, encouraging him by a look.

She had just denied her caste and her blood, she might as well now abjure her lover.

Thus encouraged, Victor continued:

"George du Hamel, if I am not mistaken, is the son of a gentleman who, after dissipating his fortune in France, went off to New Orleans to go into trade



in which he sold almost everything, both by wholesale and by retail. This did not prevent him, I know, from being received in society; for in America they have no prejudices on this subject, and any kind of necessary and useful business is respected. But in France the case is different."

Each of these phrases contained an indirect attack upon the social standing of George, and Cora was intensely interested in all that he said; and the more so because her self-love had always been wounded from infancy on account of her origin; and if she was still to be excluded from the best society by reason of George's standing, the sooner she knew it the better.

"Ah," resumed Victor, "you are then going both of you to live in Paris. Bravo! You will take up your lodgings doubtless in a very retired and unfashionable quarter. I can see that from here. A small apartment in the fourth story, with a woman to do everything. You will go sometimes to the theatre, and take a seat in the back part of the parterre, or in the gallery. In the summer, instead of breathing the open air as here, instead of sea-bathing and the watering-places, you will sometimes, on a Sunday, make an excursion in a second-class car upon the Auteuil Railroad. Ah, it is dear, living in Paris! One must live on privations, if he does not enjoy an ample fortune, and that of Monsieur Du Hamel cannot be considerable. I can guess the amount of it. It is true that you love one another," added he, with a hypocritical sigh.

Cora looked at him and smiled.

The baggage had for a long time been unloaded, and they continued talking on the threshold of the hotel.

In the state of mind in which Cora then was, this conversation was very pleasing. Victor Mazilier was initiating her in all the details of that life of dissipation and luxury which she was so desirous of becoming acquainted with. He gave to her the names of celebrated men and fashion-

able women, and taught her by what means one may, in a short time, take rank in a certain class of Parisian society.

"The time is admirably chosen," said he, "to create for one's self a position. All our old celebrities are marching with rapid steps towards an amiable decrepitude. Oh, if in the beginning of winter, about the month of October," added he, looking at Cora, "a true woman, well situated, well developed, a beautiful brunette, with expressive eyes and mouth, with that sweet foreign accent that we love so much, should make her first appearance in Paris, under the patronage of all the rich and elegant who had previously made her acquaintance, what a success and what a fortune could I predict to such a woman!"

The skillful deceiver continued in this strain; and as the hour was advancing, and George did not return, Cora, who was afraid of becoming discontented alone in her hotel, had finally concluded to take the arm of Victor Mazilier.

They went away on foot, walking together up Paris Street, stopping now and then in front of the shops to admire the rich variety of articles for sale.

Soon she became fatigued, and was obliged to accept a carriage offered her by her companion.

"I am going to show you the coast of Ingouville," said he; "it is wonderful. There are there charming estates, occupied by millionaires, who ask for nothing more than to devour their millions. I can introduce you to all of them. And what would I not do to make myself agreeable to you? You are so charming! I have loved you from the moment I first saw you."

"Don't talk to me in this way; I forbid it," said she; "cease, or I return immediately to my hotel."

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## XVII.

MEANWHILE, George, who had escaped from the embraces of his mother, ran to the India Hotel and asked for the lady who had just landed from the Zurich.

"We saw her leave," replied one, "in the direction of Paris Street, in the company of the young man who sent her baggage up to her room."

"What young man?" said George to himself, who felt that he was turning pale. "She told me she was not acquainted with any one in France."

At eight o'clock in the evening Cora had not returned, and George, who had caused her room to be opened, was waiting for her.

Twice, not being able to stay in one place, impatient, feverish, and jealous, he had gone out and ran rapidly through the principal streets of Havre. He saw her nowhere, and had returned hastily, hoping she had come in during his absence. He passed the hotel office without making any inquiry, went rapidly up-stairs, opened her door, looked around,—nobody there!

He knew he was expected by his mother, but he had not the courage to rejoin her. What could he have said to her? Could he have talked with her, as in the morning, of the five years that had just elapsed? could he answer the thousand questions which she did not cease to ask? could he question her, in his turn, press her to his bosom, and form plans for the future?

No. His thoughts would no longer have been with her. He would not have ceased to think of Cora, and to ask himself what had become of her. Jealousy allows not a moment of rest; as soon as it enters a heart it reigns there as sovereign, and renders it insensible to everything that is not directly attached to the person beloved.

How many sad thoughts and rash projects crossed his mind during these few hours! He saw himself already deceived

and abandoned. He would call to account the young man of whom the hotel clerk spoke. He would fight a duel with him, and kill him as he did John de B——.

Or else, as life for him would be insupportable without Cora, as he felt that he loved her to madness and could not do without her, he would kill himself; yes, he would kill himself under her own eyes, that his blood might spirt into her face.

He also asked himself, in his madness, if he should not kill her. Why not? They were not married. The law gave him no right over her, but morally was she not his wife? Did she not belong to him? Did not sacred ties bind them to one another? What! could she inflict upon him a thousand punishments, torture him without mercy, make him suffer as he did at that moment, strike him to the heart, and he not have the right, in his turn, to avenge himself, to punish her, and return blow for blow, and wound for wound?

"No," said he, again; "I will not seek revenge, I will not strike her,—I will quit her, I will leave her here alone, and start this very evening for Paris. She is a miserable woman! Have I not known her for a long time? I will see her no more. I have waited for her long enough. I will go."

He went to the door, opened it, went down one story, and suddenly returned hastily back.

"No, no," said he; "I must wait for her, in order to cast her infamy in her face, and tell her that she will see me no more."

But suddenly a carriage stopped on the wharf, at the door of the hotel.

"It is she," thought he; his paleness diminished, and his heart-beats were more lively.

In a moment he had already found a thousand reasons for excusing and pardoning her.

He ran to the door and looked.

It was not she.

He recommenced walking across the



room. Soon he heard a noise on the stairs, and thought he recognized Cora's step.

Then he took a chair, lighted a cigar, and tried to extemporize a tranquil and smiling face.

He was not willing she should guess at the anguish through which he had passed. He desired to question her calmly and almost with indifference, in order that she might ignore the influence she exerted over him, and might not be tempted to abuse it.

But the person who was coming up the stairs did not stop at the door; the sound of footsteps continued, and was soon lost in the distance.

George's smile vanished. His color, which had returned, disappeared; and in a fit of despair, exhausted by these alternations of fear and hope, broken down and enervated, he burst into tears.

At ten o'clock the door opened and Cora appeared.

As a contrast to George's paleness, her complexion was very animated, and she appeared still more charming than usual.

Some locks of disordered hair had escaped from beneath her bonnet, and fell upon her neck. A beautiful smile played about her lips; and there was in her gait, usually languid, something spirited and resolute which was pleasing to see.

But George perceived nothing of all this. Grave, sad, and severe, standing near the fireplace, he waited for the door to shut after Cora, and said,—

"Where do you come from?"

"From dinner," replied she, cheerfully; "and from a very good dinner, too, in one of the first restaurants of Havre. Your French cooking is decidedly superior to the American."

"Did you dine alone?"

"Alone! Can you think of such a thing?"

"With whom *did* you dine?"

"With a charming young man, whose acquaintance I made a few minutes after you left me. He is very intelligent and

amiable, and has been very serviceable to me all day."

He interrupted her by saying,—

"And so you believe that a woman who respects herself can walk or ride all day, and dine at a restaurant with the first man she happens to meet with?"

"Why not?" asked she, taking from her pocket a bunch of keys and opening one of her trunks.

"Because that cannot be done."

"It is certain," replied Cora, "that I should not have thought of accepting the kind services of that gentleman if you had been with me. But you leave me alone, in company with my trunks and yours, and you disappear——"

"I was with my mother, and you knew it."

"What is your mother to me, or I to your mother? I was alone for all that."

He suppressed an emotion of anger, and replied,—

"You could certainly stay alone for a few minutes; I was here at four o'clock."

"And I, at four," said she, with one of her charming smiles, "was on my way in a carriage to Ingouville. One has there a magnificent prospect; and if you have never seen it, I would commend it to your notice."

He could no longer restrain himself, and exclaimed,—

"But, unfortunate woman, you do not know what I have suffered during the hours just elapsed, whilst you were thus *tête-à-tête* with an unknown man."

She had just found the article she had for a moment been looking for; she took it from the trunk; and, while going to put it on a table, said quietly to George,—

"I beg of you, my dear friend, do not recommence in France the scenes you enacted in America. I am no longer in a humor to put up with them. And besides, it is late. I feel the need of sleep."

He remained silent for a moment, walked backward and forward in the room in order to tone down his excitement, and finally said to Cora,—



"You know we leave to-morrow noon."

"For where?" asked she.

"For Paris."

"Who decided upon that?"

"Was it not agreed upon that we should stay hardly a day in Havre?"

"Yes, but I had imagined it was a dirty, miserable, disagreeable place; but, on the contrary, I have found here beautiful promenades, and people anxious to please me in every way; I have decided to remain."

"I cannot," said he, with an effort at self-control, "allow my mother to return alone to Paris."

"Very well; go back with her, then."

"And you will remain with your new companion, will you not?"

"Why not?"

So much coldness and cynicism had shocked him. He was beside himself.

Terrible and threatening, he advanced towards her.

His active brain, his young blood, heated by a long sea-passage, were bad counselors, and might impel him to some painful extremity.

Suddenly, however, he stopped. He had just said to himself that an imprudent word, a threat, a gesture, might alienate forever that heart already inclined to leave him; one rash word, or movement, might be sufficient to separate him forever from that woman who was his life, that woman whom he knew from experience he could not dispense with.

"And so," said he, when he had become master of himself again, "you remain in Havre?"

"Yes, for awhile."

"Do you know if your sojourn here will be long?"

"I don't know. That will depend on the amusements that may be offered me here."

"Very well; I am now fully informed."

He reflected, seemed to be making a difficult decision, and said,—

"I will go and see my mother again, and inform her of my new plans."

"What plans?"

"I shall not accompany her to Paris, but remain in Havre."

"Ah!" said she. "You remain? I did not expect it. And what reason will you give your mother for letting her go off alone?"

"I don't know. I will think about it."

"That will be very sad for her."

"It will be sad for me too, believe me; but you constrain me to take this course."

"Not in the least. Go with your mother to Paris, and I will join you there."

"No," said he, "I have not the courage to leave you in the state of mind in which you appear to be at present."

"As you please, and good-night; I am dying with fatigue," added she.

"Good-night," said he, mildly.

Just as he got to the door she said to him,—

"By the way, is one safe in the hotel rooms in France?"

"Very nearly."

"The reason I ask is, that I have property with me, as you know, to the amount of more than sixty thousand francs, in drafts on bankers in Paris."

"If you are afraid, give them to me."

"Here," said she, handing him a small pocket-book. "You will return it to me to-morrow. But, now I think of it," added she, "if any one should attempt to rob me I can defend myself. Have I not in one of my trunks the revolver you gave me? Be kind enough to take it from the leather valise there,—that's it,—and put it near my bed, on the table, within reach of my hand. Very well, thank you."

"Shall I hand you back the drafts?"

"No; keep them, since you have them. This revolver," said she, smiling, "will be of use only to protect my person, should it be attacked."

The few words which had just been exchanged afforded a diversion to the preceding scene. Already George felt less irritated, and was ready to pardon perhaps, if she had wished it.



He took her hand, but she quickly withdrew it, saying,—

“No, no, no fondness. I am sleepy. Good-night.”

George left, but felt grieved.

But what was he to say to his mother in explanation of his long absence? How especially inform her that he should remain in Havre?

### XVIII.

MADAME DU HAMEL had not gone to bed, but was waiting at the window.

At first she was astonished at not seeing him return. To her astonishment succeeded inquietude. She had been seriously alarmed from the beginning of the evening.

“What has happened to you?” said she, when he had rejoined her: “you leave me for a moment, and— Ah, it is too bad! on a day like this.”

He was going to reply, to give some explanation, or invent some story.

He was ashamed to tell a falsehood to his mother.

And then, if fortunate lovers have no need of a confidant, they who suffer, they whose hearts are broken, are in some sort compelled to proclaim their grief. They cannot suppress it, for it would suffocate them.

Madame Du Hamel had always been a friend for her son. He had imparted to her all his secrets when a child. And later, in that charming language invented by sons to talk of all things with their mother, without wounding delicacy, he had told her all his secrets as a young man. Why, notwithstanding the lapse of five years, should they not resume their life where they had left it? Why should the grown man be less communicative than when he was younger?

“Don’t question me,” said George, dropping into a chair, “I know not what to answer. I am very unhappy.”

She rushed towards him, and taking both of his hands, while looking him in the eye, she said,—

“What is the matter with you, my child?”

And as he still hesitated to answer:

“Am I no longer your friend, your sister?” said she. “Have you forgotten our long conversations of former days? Do you fear my remonstrances? I have never given you any but good advice, my child. Speak without fear, your sorrows are *my* sorrows: they belong to me. Tell me the whole. I shall be able to hear and understand the whole.”

He obeyed, and related to her his whole life at New Orleans, from his terrible duel with John de B——. He told her how he had been led to his alliance with Cora. In a few words he described her physically and morally. He told her how he had been obliged to bring her to France, how she had conducted herself during the passage; her flirting with the passengers and officers on board, and finally her disgraceful behavior since her arrival in Havre.

“Ah,” exclaimed he, when he had ended this long recital, “I despise her and love her! I hate her and I adore her! You cannot understand me, dear mother; honest people will never admit such sentiments or feelings, and yet they exist, since I feel them. You cannot imagine the influence that woman has gained over my reason and my heart. My father, at the time of his death, made me promise that I would not take her to France. Well, I have brought her, and broken one of the most sacred of oaths. Do you believe now in my love for her? And she does not love me. No. I had still preserved some illusions; they have been dissipated to-day. Ah, how happy she would be to see me leave for Paris, and be left alone here without me!”

She interrupted him, saying,—

“What! do you not leave to-morrow with me?”

He took her in his arms, covered her with kisses, and said,—



"Ah, it is too bad, I know! I have hardly met you again, and to think of separating from you! But if I go away, if I leave her alone even a single day, she will be stolen from me, she is so beautiful! Allow me to defend my property and take her with me to Paris. Perhaps all is not lost, perhaps there is still at the bottom of her heart a remnant of affection for me,—perhaps I exaggerate her faults. And then, at Paris, when I shall be near you, and shall have resumed my good habits of former times, I shall have more courage to leave her. Here, it is impossible! Do not ask me to do it."

"Ah, unfortunate child!" said she, "I would request it of you on my knees, if I could hope that my prayers and my tears would persuade you! What would I not do, if I could pluck you from the danger in which you are? You are lost, lost, if you do not succeed in conquering that fatal passion!"

"I will conquer it, my dear mother. I solemnly promise you."

"Then I will not leave, but remain with you. I wish to give you strength against yourself. My entreaties will end, I hope, in affecting you so that you will return to your mother. You cannot have been spared to me during a long and dangerous absence, that I might lose you at last in a disgraceful way."

They continued to talk for a long time; and the day was beginning to dawn, when they both retired to take a little rest.

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## XIX.

THE next day, at nine o'clock in the morning, George entered his mother's room.

Madame Du Hamel was already up.

"Why! I hoped, as formerly, to have the pleasure of awakening you," said he, embracing her.

She was unwilling to confess to him

that she had not slept a wink for the night, and answered,—

"How happy I should be this morning, were it not for the frightful revelations you made to me last evening!"

"Do not be alarmed, dear mother," said he; "perhaps the danger is not so great, after all. I was sick yesterday, and half crazy. This morning I feel better. I look at things more coolly, and am a little less uneasy."

"Do you still hope that she loves you, and that you can win her back?"

"Not at all. I hope simply, thanks to your affection, and a little to my reason, to be able to do without her."

"Oh, my child! if you were but speaking from the heart."

"Last night, after leaving you, I reviewed my life with this woman for the last two years. With the exception perhaps of the first six months, this life was a veritable martyrdom. I know not where I found the strength, or rather the weakness, to bear what I have from her. If I do not make an energetic resolution, I shall run, as you said yesterday, into real danger. In a moment of anger, I feel that I may go to some extremity."

"What do you say?"

"Be not alarmed. I am now reasoning coolly on my situation, and think I am now out of danger."

"Then we leave to-day? This morning even, shall we not?"

"No, not this morning; but perhaps this evening."

"Be careful not to fail," exclaimed she.

"No, keep quiet."

"I pray you," said she, as if a sort of presentiment troubled her, "let us go to-day noon, as we had intended to; don't see her again!"

"It is impossible, dear mother; for I have, in the first place, to put into her hands some important papers which I cannot confide to another. In the second place, I wish to see her, speak to her, and tell her that she can no longer count upon me."



"Ah, you still hope! you think your conversation will lead her to reflection."

"I declare to you that I do not. My course has been decided upon. Give me but this day, and to-morrow I am yours entirely, and your son will have been restored to *you*."

When he left his mother he had almost reassured her; he appeared so calm, so persuaded of the necessity of a rupture, and so decided to provoke it.

"Return soon," said she, as she accompanied him to the head of the stairs; "you have promised me."

"I will keep my promise. I love you, good mother," added he, tossing her a kiss from his hand.

He was in good earnest, and was decided to break his chain and become free again.

It was in this state of mind that he knocked, a few minutes after, at Cora's door.

"Walk in," said a voice.

He went in.

Cora, in full dress, notwithstanding the early hour, was preparing to go out. She was splendidly dressed, not perhaps in the latest Parisian fashion, but in exquisite taste.

The excellent night's rest she had enjoyed had restored her complexion, given to her eyes their languid expression, and reddened her lips.

Her dress was admirably adapted to exhibit the elegance of her figure in all respects heretofore mentioned in our story.

George had never before seen her so beautiful, so complete. At New Orleans she used to go out very rarely, and spent almost every day in loose dresses,—a sort of large, flowing *robe de chambre* in use in that country. At sea she had from necessity paid but little attention to her toilette. On the day of her landing she was also in *deshabille*; so that on this occasion she revealed herself to George under a new aspect.

"Are you going out?" asked he, after contemplating her for a moment.

"You see," replied she, while finishing

her toilette, "I should not have made myself so beautiful if I were going to remain here."

"Would it be improper to ask where you are going?"

"I would tell you, but I know nothing about it. They have spoken to me about visiting several large ships."

"Has it ever occurred to you that it would be more natural and proper to walk out with me than with other persons?"

"No; it would have been necessary to take you from the company of your mother, and I respect the family."

"My mother has given me my liberty for the whole day. Can I be of any service to you?"

"Your information is too late. I have made engagements; I am sorry for you."

He felt that he was in danger of being carried away by his passion, and that he might fail of keeping the promises he had made. He kept silent, and contented himself with looking at Cora. It was perhaps the last time he would see her. He could not, without an abandonment of all dignity, accept the rôle she had imposed upon him, nor tolerate the independent life which she insisted on leading, in contempt of the simplest proprieties of life.

Without paying any attention to the impression she produced, Cora had thrown a mantilla over her shoulders, put on her Swedish gloves, taken her umbrella, and deliberately approaching the door, said,—

"*Au revoir*, George."

A kind of bewilderment came over him, and he took a step towards hindering her from going out; but suddenly stopping and shrugging his shoulders, said,—

"Bah! She is not worth the trouble."

He let her depart, and went quickly down-stairs without taking the trouble to notice in what direction she went.

What was it to him? It was decidedly well ended. They had come, without anger, without useless recriminations, without even any explanation, to a definitive rupture.



For two years he had not felt so light, joyous, and free from every care. Finally he was a free man. No more chains, no more slavery, no more tortures. It seemed to him that his heart had been relieved from an enormous pressure.

He took his way merrily towards the landing. Suddenly he heard the clock of the Museum striking.

"If it is only eleven striking," said he to himself, "I have still time to jump into a carriage, take my mother at the hotel, and leave for Paris by the noon express."

It was eleven. He went hastily to a carriage standing on the wharf. At the moment of reaching it he remembered that he had forgotten to return to Cora the drafts she had confided to him the night before. It was imprudent to leave them at the hotel. At all events, that would take time and he would miss the train.

"I will leave this evening," said he. "There is no occasion for haste. I will rejoin my mother at the hotel, and give her an airing. Poor, dear woman, how happy she will be to see me! She doubts my discretion. But she is wrong. If she only knew how I have already driven from my heart the very remembrance of that Cora! I do not even hate her. I do not even despise her any longer. She is to me simply indifferent."

He had just entered Paris Street in order to go to Admiralty Hotel by a cross street. At the moment he was passing a restaurant much esteemed by certain inhabitants of Havre, he heard bursts of laughter, and raised his head.

Cora was leaning on the balustrade of a window in the first story; behind her, and resting in some measure on her shoulder, was to be seen a young man from twenty to twenty-five years of age, of an elegant form, with a cigar.

In the back part of the room there appeared to be four or five other young men.

At this sight George felt that he was turning pale and staggering.

The perfect indifference which he made such a display of, a moment before, as re-

garded Cora, suddenly vanished. His fine resolutions abandoned him. A terrible jealousy had just stung him to the heart.

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## XX.

So there she was in a restaurant, in the company of young men with whom she was unacquainted the day before. And this woman he had loved and adored for two years. For her sake he alienated from himself all that American society which he for a long time had been so proud of. For her sake he had exposed his life in a terrible duel and killed a man.

It was this woman to whom he had often thought of consecrating his whole life, who there, under his own eyes and in the eyes of every one, dared to publicly expose herself in this shameless manner.

Had she a right thus to conduct herself, and ought he to tolerate such conduct? During the passage which they had just made, with the captain and crew of the Zurich she passed for his wife. They called her Madame Du Hamel. He had landed with her. Their baggage was still in the same room, and a thousand ties united them. What part then was he playing? What opinion would all those young men have of him? What! will he allow his mistress to live in this way? did he abandon her to them? They might suppose that she had an understanding with him that she should enjoy this kind of liberty. Instead of saying that he was weak and ridiculous, one might accuse him of infamy.

No; he must protest against this odious conduct. In the presence of all these young men he must talk plainly to this woman, compel her to take his arm, and return with him to the hotel. Then, he would tell her that he was going to leave her, that he should go to Paris, and would give her her liberty; but that so



long as he should remain in Havre, and their definitive rupture should not have taken place, honor required him to claim his rights and cause them to be respected.

In a moment his resolution was taken; he would enter the restaurant and ask for Cora; if she refused to come forward and speak to him, or if, having spoken with him, she refused to follow him, he would treat her in the presence of all as she deserved; and, should he be obliged to use violence, she should leave with him, or else he would oblige her companions to leave and give place to him.

At the moment he was crossing the threshold of the restaurant, he was arrested by the thought, "There are five or six young men in there, and they have several waiters in their service. If they should take it into their heads to put me out-of-doors, I should have made a pretty campaign, and should appear ridiculous in their eyes and Cora's too. I ought to be able, in case of necessity, to command respect and to prevent them from resorting to personal violence. I must have some kind of defensive weapon, but the most inoffensive and least demonstrative; for I do not count upon using it. Suppose I should go to the hotel and take the revolver on the table near Cora's bed!—No, that is too dangerous a weapon; for the slightest pressure of the finger would start the trigger. I wish, if they oblige me to do so, only to intimidate those men; I would not wound any one of them."

These reflections determined him to buy a pocket-pistol of the nearest gunsmith.

But in a provincial town, when one is not known, it is not so easy to buy certain kinds of arms as it is in Paris. Pocket-pistols are, besides, put into the category of prohibited arms, and if the regulation were rigorously adhered to, armorers could only sell to persons authorized to buy.

The man to whom George applied thought, the moment he entered his shop, that he was in an abnormal state of mind;

and fearing he might compromise himself, or be the cause of some accident, he got rid of his applicant by pretending that his pistols were not in a proper condition for sale at present.

This unsuccessful step had, in the sequel, such a sad influence upon the destiny of George du Hamel, and was interpreted some time after in a manner so unfavorable to him, that we could not pass it over in silence.

Not being able to buy a pistol of the armorer, George was going back to Paris Street with the intention of doing without it, and of entering boldly and without hesitation into the room where Cora was breakfasting in joyous company, when he thought he saw two carriages stop in front of the house towards which he was going. He quickened his step to come up with them, but before he arrived five persons came out of the restaurant; three of them got into the first carriage, and the other two, Cora and the young man whom George had seen half an hour before at her side, took possession of the other.

It was too late. Whilst he was losing his time at the armorer's, the breakfast was ended and they were leaving the restaurant.

The carriage which Cora had just taken passed rapidly near to George. He saw her gay and smiling, her complexion a little animated, sitting in the back part of the carriage, whilst her companion, emboldened doubtless by copious libations, took her hands and carried them to his lips.

It was a flash, a sort of vision; but from that moment George, as he afterwards confessed, lost his reason.

If all he did from about noon till half-past five in the afternoon had not been afterwards carefully hunted up and legally verified; if they had not said to him, "you did such a thing, you went into such a street, you conversed with such a person,"—he would never have known what had become of him.



Jealousy, when it reaches a certain paroxysm, often resembles intoxication. Man, under the dominion of this passion, speaks and acts without being conscious of it, and the next day no longer remembers his words and his acts.

According to the documents from which we have taken the dramatic recital which is to follow, the first impulse of George, when the carriage taking Cora away passed before him, was to run and endeavor to overtake her. But he could not succeed.

People in the street, and the shopkeepers, whom this unusual running in the most frequented part of Havre astonished, and who followed him with their eyes, saw him stop very near the European Hotel.

A two-horse livery coach was standing near the sidewalk. George ran to the coachman, and said,—

“Do you see that carriage passing yonder near the theatre? Two louis for you, if you overtake it.”

“It cannot be done,” said the coachman; “that is the carriage of Monsieur Mazilier, Junior, who is the fastest trotter in Havre, and who seems to be doing his best at this time.”

“Try it, nevertheless.”

The coachman sprang to his seat and whipped up his horses; but Mazilier's carriage had, during this time, made the tour of Comedy Square, crossed Commercial Wharf, and just entered Chaussée Street. It was lost sight of.

Then the idea occurred to George to return to the restaurant where he had seen Cora. He thought the waiters might give him some information. The one whom he addressed, fearing that by his answers he might disoblige customers whom he had known for a long time, declined to answer this stranger, whose appearance, questions, and tone appeared suspicious.

For more than two hours all trace of George du Hamel is lost. After leaving his carriage, he disappears in the direc-

tion of the grounds on which are constructed the Baths of Frascati. At five o'clock he is seen to enter the India Hotel. A waiter, who met him on the stairs, said to one of his fellows: “Just look at that gentleman of No. 33, how pale and agitated he looks. One would think that he meditates some evil design.”

Such are the different facts and items they were enabled to collect at a later period concerning the movements of George du Hamel on that day of June, 186—.

## XXI.

WHY did George return at five o'clock to India Hotel?

He could not hope or expect that Cora would very soon return to find him there. The day before, when she was hardly acquainted with Victor Mazilier, she did not leave him till nine o'clock in the evening; and now, as they were more intimately acquainted, everything led to the belief that they would not separate so soon from each other.

When he was asked afterwards for the motives of this sudden return, he could not explain. Yet these motives are easily guessed at.

Broken down in body and mind, he returned mechanically to rest at his lodgings, to the place which she left in the morning, and to which she would return sooner or later. With haggard eyes he had occupied the same place for half an hour, when the door opened. Contrary to all expectation, Cora entered the room alone.

“Why! are you here?” said she, on seeing George.

This well-known voice aroused him from his state of dejection. He suddenly stood erect. His reason returned; but, at the same time with reason, one of those fits of anger, the more terrible as they are cold and restrained, took possession of him.



While he was looking at her in silence, she said,—

"You are astonished to see me return so soon, but I come back only to go out again."

"Ah!"

"Yes; I come to get my trunks."

"Do you leave for Paris?"

"No; I remain in Havre, but leave this hotel. I wish to live at home. I have hired a small furnished house at Sainte-Adresse."

"You will occupy it doubtless with the young man who gave you a ride to-day in his carriage?"

"No; I am going to live alone. I don't wish to be dependent upon any one; and since we are upon this subject, pray listen to me."

"I will."

"I don't wish to leave you without explaining my conduct."

"Are you going to leave me?"

"At all events, we can no longer live together as we did in New Orleans. I resume my liberty and emancipate you."

He was going to reply, but she interrupted him; and taking a chair a few steps from George,—

"I have come to the conclusion, my dear friend," said she, "during the passage from New Orleans, and especially since our arrival in France, that I am not the woman to suit you. You need a woman who is quiet, honest, and somewhat provincial. I am fond of noise, commotion, festivals, and luxury. I have not *lived*, up to the present; but I want to live, and mean to. At New Orleans, you know, I was deprived of all the pleasures I desired so much. My birth and my origin have shut all doors against me. I wish now that they may be flung wide open. I aspire to taste the enjoyments which I have been deprived of until the present time. My pride and my vanity have cruelly suffered, and I wish that finally they may be satisfied. I am a great-granddaughter of a slave. My ancestors have been sold, beaten,

humiliated, and martyred. I mean, thanks to the position I am going to occupy, to efface all this shame and disgrace. *La fille de couleur*, bruised, wounded, and disdained, lifts her head at last, stands erect, and intends, in her turn, to command and reign,—yes, reign over *all* hearts, for yours is no longer sufficient. What sort of life do *you* offer me? A simple and retired one, is it not? It would horrify me. I intend, before one year passes by, to have carriages and jewels to sell."

He interrupted her by saying, coolly,—

"You wish, in one word, to become a courtesan?"

"Be it so! What do I care about the *word*, provided I am rich, and reign, and have all men at my feet?"

"You were speaking just now of *humiliation*," said he; "do you think they suffer no humiliation whose rival you aspire to be? You were despised and neglected in New Orleans because of your birth and origin, and that was an injustice, I grant. *Here* you will be despised because of your scandalous conduct, and *that* will be justice."

"*Who* will despise me? Mothers of families, you may say. Well, they will remain at home in their drawing-rooms. As to their sons, they will come to my house, and shall pay dear, I assure you, for the disdain of their mothers."

"Yes, yes," said he, without loss of that terrible *sang-froid* which ought to have given Cora an occasion to reflect, "I see well what you intend to do; you will engulf some fortunes and break some hearts."

"As many fortunes and hearts as I possibly can," replied she, with her habitual cynicism.

"And you are going to begin by ruining one of the young men with whom you breakfasted this morning?"

"Exactly so; the son of one of the richest ship-owners in Havre, young Victor Mazilier. He is dead in love with me, and makes me brilliant promises."



"Take care that he does not deceive you."

"Oh, I will look out for that. I am not a simpleton. I have read a good deal in my hammock in New Orleans. Your French novelists have taught me a good deal about human life. I am posted in all the varieties of dissipation, both Parisian and provincial," added she, misled by the seeming indifference and calmness of George, and believing that he was talking with her as a companion. "The house I am going to occupy from this evening has been hired in the name of Mazilier."

"That is a security," said he, "and it is he whom you intend to rejoin presently?"

"Yes; he is going to treat some of his friends, and I am to do the honors of the house."

He advanced towards Cora; and this time, with clinched fists, contracted voice, and pale as death, he said,—

"Have you reflected on the part that I am playing in this matter?"

"You?"

"Yes, *I*. *I* who have just landed with you,—*I* whom everybody knew to be your lover in New Orleans,—*I* whose name you bore on board the Zurich,—*I* whose trunks are there still mixed up with yours."

"Never mind that. We are going to separate them."

He took no notice of this remark, and continued:

"What opinion do you think Victor Mazilier will have of me, as also all those young men you are going to rejoin? They will say that I tolerate your conduct, and that I profit by it, perhaps."

"Ah, my friend," exclaimed she, "pray let me alone. You are in no way responsible for my conduct. We are not bound to each other for eternity. I am going my way, and you may go yours. But if I listened to you, I well know that we should be on our way arm in arm this very evening for Paris; am I right? I have already told you that I am not willing for that. Stay here, my friend, stay; I have

no objection: I even desire it; remain as my lover, but allow me to do as I please, and don't torment me about what people may say or think. Go and join your mother; I am going to join those gentlemen. I will give orders below for my trunks. *Au revoir*, and always yours when you wish it. By the way, the drafts which I left in your care?"

"I will not return them," said George.

"Why not?" asked she, astonished.

"Because you have no need of them at present; you remain with me. You will not leave to rejoin those men."

"Indeed! who will prevent it?"

"*I*," said he, springing for the door.

"Ah! do you believe that?" cried she.

"Is it thus that you reward the frankness which I have just shown you, and the friendly way in which I have conversed with you? You forget, my dear sir, that I am never prevented from doing what I please. I fear no one, and you less than any other. Come, enough of this. Make way for me, I wish to leave."

"You shall not leave."

"Ah! I shall *not* leave? Well, I *will* leave, and will call no one to my assistance; but you yourself shall open the door for me."

"And what will you do to accomplish that?"

Pale and trembling she approached him, and said,—

"I will tell you: George, I deceived you this morning, and I am going to deceive you again to-night."

"You lie!" exclaimed he, "you will deceive me no more."

And taking from the table, near the bed, the revolver he had formerly given her, he fired.



## XXII.

ALL in the hotel were aroused in a moment. They looked at each other, consulted together, and came to the conclusion that this detonation came from the second story, and from room No. 33.

Immediately the proprietor of the hotel, followed by his waiters and several travelers, hastened up-stairs. The key was in the door and they entered without any difficulty.

In the middle of the room lay Cora, motionless. A stream of blood was flowing from the wound she had received. A few steps from her stood George, sullen and silent, still holding his pistol in his hand. He did not even turn his head to look at the people who were pressing into the chamber.

The murderer appeared as lifeless as the victim.

"Quick, quick, a physician!" cried some. "The police commissioner," cried others. "He must be arrested," said one. "Take care, he is still armed," said others.

"An assassin!" vociferated several persons on the stairs.

These cries aroused George from his torpor. He looked around and understood what was going on.

He was the assassin. There was no possible doubt of it. He was a lost man. He then cast a last look upon Cora; not a look of hatred, but of love.

His lips opened as if to utter a prayer, or to address a last adieu to his mother. Then he raised the revolver and applied the muzzle to his right temple. But one of those present, more intrepid than the others, had just slipped in behind him, and seizing the pistol, wrested it from his hands.

Then George made a leap and sprang towards the window, for the purpose of precipitating himself into the street.

He was disarmed, and no longer feared. Ten persons seized him at the same time, and brought him to the floor.

"Ah!" murmured he, in a plaintive

voice, "why prevent me from taking my own life?"

They tied his hands, while he made no resistance, keeping his eyes fixed on Cora.

New cries, uttered by persons who had remained on the stairs, were heard.

"Here is the police commissioner!"

He entered, followed by a physician and two assistants, and his first care, after surveying the scene, was to clear the room.

The physician kneeled before Cora, raised her head and examined her wound.

George standing, with his hands tied, kept his eyes on the physician, and anxiously waited for the decision he would make.

On the stairs a confusion of voices was heard, and in the street the buzzing of the crowd, which was gradually collecting under the windows of the hotel.

After a short examination, the physician raised his head and said to the commissioner, "The wound is not mortal, but this unfortunate woman is disfigured for life."

He drew a case of instruments from his pocket, ordered some water and linen, and proceeded to the first dressing of the wound.

After a few minutes the hemorrhage was arrested, fainting ceased, and Cora opened her eyes.

Pain caused her to close them, but soon after she opened them again and looked around.

Suddenly she perceived George and made a quick motion, which deranged the apparatus applied to her wound. The blood flowed again and Cora fainted. The physician, having renewed his treatment of the patient, advanced to the commissioner, and said to him, in a low voice,—

"I should fear for the patient that, in coming out of this new fainting fit, she might again see him who appears to have been the cause of this sad event. Could you not," continued he, designating George, "get that man to leave the chamber?"

"Certainly," said the commissioner; "I



am going to take him to the city prison. I am, however, obliged to make him undergo here a previous short interrogatory."

"Make haste," replied the doctor.

The commissioner advanced to George, shook him by the arm to arouse him from his state of dejection, and said,—

"What is your name?"

"George du Hamel."

"Where do you live?"

"I have as yet no fixed residence, having arrived here but yesterday, on board the Zurich."

"You are a Frenchman, however; have you any recommendation from any foreign consul?"

"No; I am a Frenchman."

"Do you confess to having fired a pistol at this woman?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you fire voluntarily, or did the pistol go off accidentally?"

He reflected, and said,—

"I do not know exactly what has taken place, but I think I fired intentionally."

"What motive had you for committing this crime?"

"She made me too unhappy, and I loved her too much."

"Very well," said the commissioner; "for the present this interrogatory is sufficient."

He called his two assistants and gave them orders in an under-tone.

They advanced to George, took him each by an arm and led him away.

He left without making the least resistance, after giving a parting look at Cora.

Being left alone with the physician, the commissioner asked him if he thought the patient would soon be in a condition to answer one or two important questions.

"It is impossible for the moment," said the doctor; "but I will describe to you her wound or wounds in a few words.

[Here follows an elaborate scientific description in technical language, which would not be interesting to readers generally.]

"You conclude, from the description of the wound you have given, that the unfortunate woman cannot speak at present," said the commissioner, interrupting the man of science, who seemed to take too much pleasure in his surgical explanations.

"I do," said the physician.

"But," replied the commissioner, "when she shall have come to herself, may I not put one or two questions, to which she can reply by signs?"

"I see no objections," said the doctor, "to that course; and, since your questions seem to be indispensable, I think it more prudent to put them now than to-morrow. The fever cannot fail to show itself in a few hours; and even some ulterior complication may supervene which might aggravate her condition and oblige us to resort to extreme caution."

A few minutes after this short conversation Cora opened her eyes again. The intelligence that appeared in her eyes, in spite of the keen pains she must experience, authorized the doctor to allow the commissioner of police to approach and speak to her.

"I have an important question to put to you," said he, leaning towards the patient. "Do not try to answer me vocally, but only make an effort to write two lines on this note-book. Do you think you have the strength for that?"

"Yes," said she, by a nod of the head.

He put a pencil in her hand, slipped under her fingers a note-book, and said, "Why did the man named George du Hamel fire a pistol at you?"

She seemed to reflect a moment, then a strange fire shone in her eyes, and she wrote these words, with a firm hand,—

"He had just robbed me, and wished to kill me to prevent my exposing him. You will find upon him the value of sixty thousand francs which belong to me."

This act of vengeance being accomplished, she fell back exhausted upon her bed.



## XXIII.

REASSURED by the promises of her son in the morning, and especially by the calmness with which he had spoken with her, Madame Du Hamel had passed a pretty comfortable day.

"He assured me," said she to herself, "that he would return this evening, and he will keep his word. Doubtless he is taking his leave of that woman; he is explaining to her why he quits her. But I am no longer afraid of her. He would not have spoken to me so coldly of her, nor have judged her with so much severity, if he loved her still. His heart is too loyal, too good, to be led astray any longer. He will belong to me entirely hereafter."

About four o'clock in the afternoon, when the heat, which was excessive on that day, had a little abated, she went out to take the air.

At the door of the hotel she asked herself in what direction she had better go: towards the centre of the city, or towards the landing.

If, at this moment, she had decided in favor of Paris Street, she would, in all probability, have met George and calmed his irritation, and the fearful catastrophe related in the preceding chapter might have been prevented. But fate willed that she should go towards the landing. The desire had suddenly occurred to her of seeing again the place where her son had appeared to her the day before.

Madame Du Hamel had just passed in front of the signal tower, when she thought she recognized in a person slowly walking, like a veritable *flâneur*, or rather like a sailor on his watch, the old sea captain whose attention had been so useful to her the day before. She walked quickly towards him, and as he, in his turn, had just recognized her:

"Ah, captain," said she, affectionately, "I am happy to meet you! You have taken me, I am sure, for an ungrateful

woman. To think, that I left you yesterday without even thanking you!"

"Thanking *me!*" said he, with his usual bluntness. "I hope you do not think that I counted on it. What! leave your son to return to *me!* If you had I should never have pardoned you."

And changing his tone, he added:

"Well, you are now in possession of your dear son. Happy mother!"

"Oh, yes, very happy," said she.

"You have found him grown up, more handsome and amiable than ever. That is the effect produced upon me when my sons return from their long voyages. Ah, what weak, silly creatures we are, eh?"

She smiled at the expression and took the arm tendered her by the excellent man.

They walked together a long time, talking, she of him who returned the day before, and he of those who were still plowing the seas.

"Captain," said Madame Du Hamel, about five o'clock, "suppose we should continue our conversation at my hotel? It is but a step or two off, and my son will soon join me. Perhaps he is waiting for me already. I should be very happy to introduce him to you, and give him an opportunity to thank you for the various civilities shown me yesterday."

"So be it," replied the captain. "I understand it. You have just been praising your son, and you wish to prove to me that you were still beneath the mark that he would bear."

"Well, yes, captain," said she, smiling, "I confess my weakness in that direction."

A quarter of an hour after, Madame Du Hamel was sitting in front of the captain, in the small room she occupied in the Admiralty Hotel.

Soon, however, the conversation, so lively a moment before, began to lag; a sort of vague inquietude was getting possession of the mother of George. She asked herself if that woman had not



managed to retain him, and if he had not forgotten his promises and changed his intentions.

As it was warm in the room, she opened the window, and looking out, she exclaimed,—

“Look here, captain, why are all those people there on the wharf? Do you know the reason of it?”

He came to the window and said,—

“No; I don’t know what is going on there. These people seem much agitated, and talk with a good deal of animation. Has some accident happened at sea? If you will allow me, madame, I will go and inquire into the matter.”

“As you please, captain; I will wait.”

He went out and returned in five minutes.

“It appears,” said he, on rejoining Madame Du Hamel, who had not left the window, “that a murder was committed but a moment ago, a few steps from here, in the India Hotel.”

“Ah, *mon Dieu!* and upon whom?”

“Upon a young woman who had been staying in the hotel since yesterday, but whose name no one could give me.”

“And we are quietly staying here while a murder is committed by our side. Who is the murderer?”

“A young man from twenty-five to thirty years of age. He has been arrested.”

Suddenly Madame Du Hamel, a little indifferent until this time, at these details, turned pale and leaned against the balustrade of the window to avoid falling.

An unreasonable idea had just crossed her mind, which she repelled, and soon recovered, saying to the captain, with a smile,—

“Ah, you were very right just now; how ridiculous mothers are sometimes!”

“Fathers are not a whit less so,” said the captain.

Meanwhile the crowd kept increasing on the wharf. It was extending now to the front of Admiralty Hotel, and voices reached the window occupied by Madame Du Hamel and the captain.

They were able to distinguish remarks like these:

“They are going to take him off to prison.” “The case is a clear one.” “Ah, here is the carriage the policeman went for.” “Take care; get out of the way; you will be crushed.”

The carriage had just arrived. The crowd huddled together and made room for it. The coachman succeeded in placing his horses in front of India Hotel.

The police agent in the carriage hastily got out, and ordered the hotel door to be opened, which it had been thought prudent to close. Several *apparitors* (this is the name they give in Havre to the city constables) who had appeared, on account of the tumult, kept back the curious and made an empty space between the hotel and the carriage.

“He is coming down,” they said in the crowd.

“There he is! there he is!”

“Attention!”

A little ten-year-old boy, well acquainted, no doubt, with Parisian usages, had set up an old hogshead on the sidewalk, and was screaming himself hoarse with the announcement: “Place to let, place to let, only five centimes!” Children got on to the back of taller persons, *gamins* had perched on the roofs of houses, and on the wooden cabins destined for the employees of the boatmen of Trouville and Honfleur.

Madame Du Hamel could not detach herself from her window; an invincible power, perhaps a secret presentiment, fastened her to her place.

Near her the captain looked on as an amateur.

“A *heap* of imbeciles,” murmured he, from time to time; “they give themselves a deal of trouble to see—what? Why, a man who looks like any other man.”

“An unfortunate man, perhaps, led astray through poverty or passion,” said Madame Du Hamel.

“Places to let, for five centimes!” continued to cry out the little boy.



The noise ceased as if by enchantment. The door of the hotel had just been opened.

George appeared.

His hands were tied behind his back, and two policemen were holding his arms as an additional precaution.

A heart-rending cry was heard from the window of Admiralty Hotel.

Madame Du Hamel had just recognized her son.

#### XXIV.

THE day these events occurred, Monsieur De T——, then attorney-general at Havre, was at a family dinner, when a servant informed him that a lady wished to see him.

"And you told her that I was at dinner?" said he.

"Yes, your honor; but the lady insists on seeing his honor on a matter of the highest importance. She is accompanied by a sea-captain well known to your honor."

"Very well; show them into my office."

Some minutes after, Monsieur De T—— joined Madame Du Hamel and her companion.

"Permit me, Mr. Attorney-General," said the captain, "to introduce to you an unhappy mother, and to invoke in her behalf all your kindness. She is too much excited at present to explain to you the object of her visit. I will, with your permission, do it for her."

"Proceed, sir."

"Madame is a widow," resumed the captain, "and resides in Paris. She came to Havre to wait for her son, who had been living for several years in New Orleans, and who arrived yesterday. This son had been out since the morning, and we were waiting for him at Admiralty Hotel, where madame is staying, when we saw a large crowd collecting on the wharf. They spoke of a young man who

had fired a pistol at a woman. Suddenly, this young man, taken off by the police, passed before us, and this lady recognized him as her son."

"The lady's name, then, is Madame Du Hamel? The police commissioner has already sent me a note on this affair. It is of a serious character, and I was going to attend to it. How, madame? is it your son who——"

After a violent effort, she succeeded in subduing her emotion, and said,—

"He is innocent, sir! he is innocent! Oh, if you knew him, if you knew how good he is, how honest and brave! There is some mistake; they have arrested him without a hearing. But you will set him at liberty; all will be explained."

She stopped, and sobs choked her voice.

When she was more calm, the attorney-general spoke as follows,—

"Madame, you have come to me with the hope that I may be able to assist you officially. I am deeply grieved at your affliction, and am quite disposed to be of service to you. But in the interest of yourself and son, and a little also in that of society, which I represent, it seems to me important not to begin, in this matter, by indulging in any illusions. You say to me, 'My son is not guilty;' but I reply, 'He certainly is.' According to a note which I have before me, there is no possible doubt in the case. A pistol has been fired at a woman, a foreigner, who has been residing only since yesterday at the India Hotel. The man guilty of this act is called George du Hamel,—that is indubitable. And now, is the question about a crime, or an accident? When questioned by the police commissioner, your son replies, 'Yes, I believe I fired,' And to the question as to the motive for doing so, he says, 'She made me too unhappy! I loved her too well!'"

"He is mistaken, sir! he is mistaken!" said the unfortunate woman. "He may have had a quarrel with that woman. A pistol may have been within reach; he may have seized it; it may have gone off;



and in his despair and stupor he may have answered the first thought that came to mind, or what may have been wished of him."

The attorney-general did not think it his duty to show up the improbability of this version of the case. In his career, already a long one, criminal affairs of all sorts had passed before him, and he thus accounted for this one: A young man of good family, in a moment of madness or bewilderment, after a scene of jealousy, had fired on his mistress. Ordinarily, the ball breaks a glass, or is buried in the wall. The two lovers pay the damages, and the law has no occasion to interfere. In this case, the ball had maladroitly hit its object. There was a wound, a severe wound, and the courts must deal with it. But the guilty man might be worthy of indulgence, and that was what Monsieur De T—— wished to know as soon as possible.

"You were not probably cognizant, madame," said he to Madame Du Hamel, "of the intimacy of your son with that woman, and therefore cannot give me any information in that direction?"

"I beg pardon, sir," replied she, "George has always confided to me his most secret thoughts. Yesterday, and even this morning, he told me all the woman you speak of has made him suffer. He had known her in America, and had by her been influenced to take her to France. Well, is it strange? He is so young; and he had not me with him, as a guide, and his father had just died. Alone, left to himself, in some measure abandoned, he allowed this woman to exert an influence over him which she cruelly abused. But he wished to get rid of her. He was to set out with me this very evening for Paris, after making his farewell call upon her. That was his solemn promise to me."

"That is just what I thought," said the attorney-general to himself; "a quarrel, a scene, a fit of passion,—there cannot have been any premeditation. An attempt will be made to cure the woman as

speedily as possible, and to appease her with money. The affair may be settled, perhaps, without much trouble."

He was seeking for words which, without compromising his responsibility, might comfort Madame Du Hamel a little, when another note was handed him from the police commissioner.

This magistrate informed him of the accusation of robbery brought by Cora against George du Hamel, an accusation substantiated by the discovery of a pocket-book in possession of the prisoner, containing the value of sixty thousand francs, in the name of Mademoiselle Cora. He sent also, in this note, the deposition of the armorer, of whom George had tried, without success, to buy a pair of pistols. Finally, the commissioner of police informed the attorney-general, that hardly was he inside the prison, when he attempted to commit suicide, and they were obliged to keep him under guard.

Thus in a moment this affair had changed in aspect. The question was no longer about wounds inflicted without intention of producing death, and in a moment of excitement caused by jealousy. But the question now was about robbery, followed by an attempt at assassination, and premeditation seemed to appear from the first testimony they had been able to obtain. The attorney-general looked at Madame Du Hamel, and read in her face the terrible emotion she experienced.

He had not the courage to tell her the truth. What would be the use of informing her at this time? She would know all about it quite soon enough. But as this false position could not be prolonged, "Madame," said he, rising, "please excuse me, I am obliged to leave——"

"Yes, sir; yes, I understand; but my son——"

"I can do nothing for him at present, madame; this affair must be investigated."

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* but I shall see him? You will allow me to go and see him in his prison?"



"That is impossible this evening, madame."

"What do you say? Oh, sir,—but pray think—what will become of him, the poor child? He will think himself abandoned and lost! Ah, if he should kill himself!" exclaimed she, with a heart-rending accent.

Her maternal instinct made her divine the danger George was in.

"Write to him, madame," said the attorney, himself frightened at the idea of a suicide, which the papers would not fail to make a reproach to the authorities. "Tell him that you beg of him to live. Here, madame, are all the conveniences you need for writing."

She sat down at Monsieur de T——'s desk and wrote four pages, stopping only to wipe away the tears that obscured her vision.

This letter, which George's attorney read afterwards in court, was admirable. It ended in these words:

"If you are not guilty, live to save your outraged honor. If you are guilty, oh, live on, live for your mother, who pardons you, who cannot do without you, and whom your death would kill!"

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## XXV.

Two months after the events we have just related, George du Hamel was brought before the court of assizes of the Lower Seine, sitting at Rouen.

All the steps taken by Madame Du Hamel in the interest of her son had been useless. This affair had acquired too great a notoriety to allow any impediment to be thrown in the way of justice, or for the court, had it wished to do so, to use any indulgence.

Victor Mazilier, whose most cherished hopes had been ruined by an accident, saw in this crime a means of getting himself talked about, and of posing as a Love-

lace. By his continual whimperings and lamentations, one would have thought that the ball which had struck Cora had hit him. His friends, in memory of the breakfast in Paris Street, joined the chorus with him; and as these gentlemen, by their relations and fortune, exerted a certain influence upon public opinion, Havre, and soon Rouen and Paris, had become more than usually excited.

The accusation of robbery brought against George du Hamel had been so precise, Cora had renewed it afterwards with so much assurance, that persons disposed at first to interest themselves in the defendant, to consider him as the victim of an inordinate passion, and to lend to him all the charms of a hero of romance, had suddenly found their enthusiasm toning down. George was no longer to them anything but a common malefactor; and if his trial excited a lively curiosity, it was because the accused belonged to a certain class of society, and that people could not help sympathizing with that Cora, formerly so beautiful it was said, but now so disfigured for life.

At half-past nine, on the morning of the 22d of August, 186—, the doors of the court were thrown open to the public.

Madame Du Hamel and Cora, with some persons between them, were seated on the witness-bench.

The one had made a last appeal to her courage to assist her son to the last hour; the other, forgetting her coquetry, which ought to have prevented her from showing herself in public in the condition in which she was, had wished to sustain with her own voice her accusation, and pursue her vengeance to the bitter end.

After the impaneling of the jury, and when the defendant had been brought into court, the judge, or president, ordered the reading of the indictment. After this the attorney-general stated the points in the case as follows:

"According to the indictment, George du Hamel stands accused of having, on



the 12th of June, 186—, at Havre, committed, with premeditation, an attempt at assassination on the person of one Cora,—an attempt manifested by a beginning of execution, which failed of its effect only through circumstances independent of the will of its author:

“Of having, moreover, on the same day, in the same place, committed, to the prejudice of said Cora, a robbery by the aid of violence, having left traces of wounds or contusions, crimes anticipated in Articles 2, 296, 297, etc., etc., of the Penal Code.”

Being interrogated by the president, after the usual formalities, George du Hamel confessed that he had, in a moment of passion, which he deplored from the bottom of his heart, fired a pistol at his mistress; but he protested against the accusation of robbery which she had caused to hang over him. He ended by saying that he left to his attorney the care of demonstrating the falsity of this accusation.

When Cora advanced to testify, a lively feeling of curiosity was manifested in the audience. A large part of her face was covered by a bandage. She lifted it a little, in order to be able to answer the questions of the president of the court.

When he asked her if she persisted in the deposition she had made in writing during the preparation of the case, she said, very decidedly, that she did.

Then, suddenly turning to George du Hamel and extending her arm:

“That man,” cried she, “is not only an assassin, but a robber!”

Her gesture was eloquent and her voice convincing. Her eyes had a strange expression. A shudder ran through the audience, whilst George whispered in the ear of his lawyer, “She is avenging herself!”

Happily, the interrogatory of Madame Du Hamel soon destroyed the bad effect produced upon the jury by the declarations of Cora.

This cultured woman of the world, who

had never perhaps raised her voice in public,—this mother so timid and weak,—advanced bravely in front of the court, thanked the judges for the permission given her not to be present at the trial, but declared that she had, on the contrary, wished to take a part in it. Then, turning to the jury, she energetically defended her son; and the president, notwithstanding she was out of order, did not think fit to deny her the liberty she had taken. She used touching expressions to describe the love that her son had for her, the care and solicitude with which she had surrounded him in his youth. She read the last letter which he wrote her from New Orleans, announcing his return. She tried to demonstrate that this accusation of robbery was inadmissible, for she had a respectable fortune, and her son could dispose of it as he wished. And had he not inherited from his father more than three hundred thousand francs? and had he not sent this fortune to France, writing to his mother that he relinquished all his rights to her? For what purpose could he have wished to appropriate to himself sixty thousand francs belonging to the woman he loved, and to whom he would have sacrificed everything if she had wished it?

Finally, turning to Cora, and as the latter had turned to George, she said, “Madame, you appear here as in a civil suit for damages. You claim from my son a sum of money for the wrong which has been inflicted on you physically. We understand it. My son has committed a great fault, and wishes to repair it as far forth as he can. We offer you our entire fortune, his and mine; but, pray, renounce your terrible accusation; do not change the character of this trial; do not any longer prejudice the court against us; do not dishonor us. It is a mother who speaks to you. If you have no pity on my son, have pity on me!”

When she had finished speaking, one of the jury rose, and requested the pre-



siding officer to interrogate Cora again, and to ask her if she persisted in her declarations.

The president complied with the request, and Cora replied that she persisted in her accusation.

Victor Mazilier, in his deposition, did not obtain all the success he had hoped for. As he wished to launch out into fine phrases and expatiate upon the charms of Cora, the president interrupted him dryly, and ordered him to return to his seat.

The attorney-general sustained the accusation, and spoke as attorney-generals unfortunately too often speak. Instead of being cool and calm, he was eloquent, impassioned, and ardent in his attack. He brought up all the antecedents of George du Hamel; he described him as irascible and violent; he characterized as criminal his youthful outbreaks at the time he was at school in Paris; he condemned the liberal tendencies of the student and the young man. He dwelt at length upon his first political duel at twenty-one; upon his arrest in consequence of blows administered to a policeman; upon his second duel, which terminated in the death of John de B——. This last affair was represented by the attorney in such a way as to make George appear an implacable and terrible duelist, and his adversary, John de B——, an innocent martyr in a holy cause,—a timid man, who fights a duel because he has been challenged.

“You see him, gentlemen,” said the attorney, on finishing this first part of his plea, “when hardly out of college, in open conflict with society. He braves authority, strikes the officers charged with the duty of causing it to be respected. He takes a sword, and severely wounds one of his fellow-students,—a student like himself, who has no other fault than not sharing his revolutionary ideas. Soon his residence in Paris becomes too dangerous for him; his unhappy mother fears that he may commit

new faults or crimes, and sends him to the United States. Do you believe, gentlemen of the jury, that he is going to change his conduct there? Not at all. In requital for the hospitalities offered him by the Creoles of New Orleans, he rebels against their ideas, prejudices, and usages. They protest; then he insults and strikes. He is challenged to fight a duel; he gladly accepts the challenge. Oh, yes! when the question is about deadly weapons, whether a sword or a revolver, he is always ready. Why, gentlemen, the minister of justice wrote to New Orleans to get some details about this duel. Do you know what the reply was? Listen: John de B—— had, when he expired, his body covered with wounds, in his arms, breast, and neck, and his adversary still continued to fight. Such is the man you have before you this day for judgment.”

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## XXVI.

THE second part of the attorney-general's address to the jury begins like an eclogue. He relates the arrival of Cora in France. “She is young, beautiful, and adorably charming. All those who have become acquainted with her, Victor Mazilier and his friends, delight in praising the sweetness of her character and the amenity of her manners. Poor woman! she had heard speak in her native country, New Orleans, of European civilization, of French courtesy. She has confidence in our hospitality and honor. What a sweet life she is going to lead among us! She thought of going to Paris, but Normandy appears to her so beautiful, this splendid department of the Lower Seine, where you were born, gentlemen of the jury, has so captivated her that she decides to live in Havre. She is making arrangements for housekeeping, and is



cheerful and happy. The proprietor of India Hotel, near whom she passes to go to her room, has just told you so, gentlemen. Everything connected with her savored of happiness. Hardly a half-hour had elapsed, and a terrible detonation is heard. They run to her room, and find the unfortunate woman bathed in her blood. This beautiful creature is forever disfigured. What had taken place during this half-hour?"

The attorney-general tries to establish the accusation of robbery on solid and irrefutable bases. But here his address is less beautiful and his logic less close. He is obliged to *switch* off into the domain of fancy.

If you believe him, Cora is an embarrassment to George du Hamel. She is a clog upon his life. This unfortunate woman loves him ardently, to such a degree that one day, in America, she bought a revolver, saying, "I will kill you if you ever deceive me." It is the defendant himself who, of his own accord, used these words in presence of the judge presiding in preparing this case.

"How is he to get rid of this woman? He will rob her. And when she shall be alone, destitute of resources, she, so faithful till then, will commit some fault towards him; she will listen, perhaps, to the discourse of those young men to whom he abandoned her, so to speak, on the day of her arrival, and then he will come and say to her, 'You have deceived me, you are unworthy of me,—begone!' Who prevents him from robbing her? They are alone. She is weak, and he is strong. He seizes her, takes from her the pocket-book containing her money, and prepares to leave. That very night he will be *en route* for Paris. But she protests, cries out, and calls for help. He foresees himself arrested and condemned as a robber. Then he seizes a pistol and fires."

As to the question of premeditation, the attorney-general has no need of drawing upon his imagination. The facts exist, and he uses them.

"Would a jealous man," said he, "think of going to buy a pistol in view of a quarrel which he will *perhaps* have with his mistress? Nonsense! He wants the pistol for the bad use he intends to make of it. It is evident, it is certain."

The attorney-general concluded by asking from the jury a terrible verdict; and the more terrible, as the victim is a woman and a foreigner.

"What respect," said he, "will Americans have for us, if we do not see to it that ample justice is done to them?"

After a short recess of the court, the counsel for the defendant took the floor.

This was Monseigneur X——, chief of the advocates of the Imperial Court of Rouen. In a simple and elevated style, he refutes the arguments of the plaintiff, and presents each fact, one after another, in a new light.

As to the antecedents of the accused, he declares that he knows of none better. "He is the most devoted friend and affectionate son that ever lived. He is reproached with having taken a part formerly in outbreaks in the Latin quarter. Is it a crime to be ardent and enthusiastic in support of great ideas? What becomes of those students, at a later period, whom you are pleased to consider so terrible? They become merchants, farmers, and artists, like yourselves, gentlemen of the jury. Sometimes they happen to wear the gown and the ermine, like you, gentlemen of the court. But you reproach him with his two duels. The first goes for nothing. Indeed, gentlemen, it was a pleasantry, a mere joke; and I am astonished that the government has even made mention of it. As to the second, I will relate it to you, but not after your manner. It shall be the truth, for I shall rest upon authentic documents, journals of the country, and letters written to me from New Orleans. Here they are. I will read them to you, and you shall judge." After this reading, Monseigneur X—— said,—

"There you have John de B——, and



there you have George du Hamel. You see how both conducted themselves, and how they both fought."

Going directly to the bottom of the matter, Monseigneur X——, in an excited voice, related the facts as they took place and in all their simplicity. The reader is acquainted with them, and knows by what feeling George was influenced. He, the reader, does not acquit him perhaps entirely, but he has for him a sincere indulgence. He sees for what object he wished during the day to procure a pair of pistols, and the premeditation is entirely destroyed. He knows how the pocket-book containing Cora's money was found in George's hands, and he has never had the thought of suspecting him of robbery. In his peroration, Monseigneur X—— addresses himself to the jury and entreats them to acquit his client. He makes a last appeal to their conscience, and points them to that mother, that splendid woman, near them, in tears and extending her arms asking them to restore to her her son, her dearly beloved son.

If, after this eloquent pleading, the jury had entered their room for deliberation, we are persuaded they would have returned a verdict of *not guilty* on every question. But the president made the usual review of the arguments on both sides, and his *summing up* lasted two hours. When he ceased speaking, the jurors, cooled down by this new, calm, and in some measure elegant discourse, had forgotten the exciting eloquence of the defendant's counsel, and their hearts no longer beat so much in his favor.

The following is the result of their deliberations:

On the first question:

"Is the accused guilty of having made an attempt at assassination at Havre, and with premeditation," etc.

The answer of the jury was:

"Yes, the accused is guilty."

On the second question:

"Is he guilty of having committed, on the same day, and in the same place, and to the prejudice of said Cora, a robbery by the aid of violence?"

"No, the accused is not guilty."

"In the opinion of the majority there are extenuating circumstances in favor of the accused."

The court, at the request of the attorney-general, who asks for damages and interests, retires to deliberate, and soon returns with the following result:

"In view of the verdict of the jury, from which it results that George du Hamel is guilty on the first question:

"And considering that there are in favor of the accused certain extenuating circumstances; and in view of Articles 2, 296, 297, the court condemns George du Hamel to *five years of hard labor*."

When the president pronounced the words *hard labor* (*travaux forcés*), a voice was heard: "Oh, my God!" At this moment a woman sitting on the witness-bench fainted entirely away. It was Madame Du Hamel. George attempted to rush to her assistance, but was prevented by the gendarmes. Then all the self-command he had shown up to that moment abandoned him, and he wept like a child.

Whilst they were taking Madame Du Hamel out of court, the president continued, as follows:

"Whereas it has appeared from the debates that George du Hamel has inflicted upon the woman Cora an injury, for which reparation is due, the court condemns him to pay to said Cora the sum of thirty thousand francs, and fixes at three years the duration of bodily restraint."

About the month of October of the same year Madame Du Hamel established herself at Toulon, in order to be nearer her son, who had just been transferred to prison.



## PART II.—THE JOURNAL OF A YOUNG GIRL.

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### I.

JANUARY 8, 18—.

THE waiter-girl of the nunnery has just entered the study-room with that discreet haste and prescribed manner which constitute a part of her person as much as her black cap, scantily trimmed with lace. She whispered a few words in the ear of Mother Saint Joseph, who was superintending the studies; and Mother Saint Joseph, in her turn, assumed her whining tone in order to announce that I was wanted in the parlor, and that our reverend mother authorized me to go there.

A visit outside of regular hours! What can that mean? Quickly I put on my pelerine and gloves, and proceed to the parlor. I found there my father, who was impatiently waiting for me. He embraced me more cordially than usual, and said,—

“My dear child, you cannot understand what pleasure I feel in pressing you to my bosom. I thought, for a long while, that I should not see you again. While you were accusing me, perhaps, of forgetting you, I thought a great deal of you. I did not wish to cause you unnecessary anxiety by informing you that I was in danger, but I promised myself to live for you if I should return to life. Now I keep my word. I take you away, and you quit the convent. I have informed the lady superior of this resolution, but she did not approve of it. She trembles for your future. She went so far as to accuse me of selfishness. Do not fear. No, I am not selfish. I may be weak, at the most. But I can never be

persuaded that a father is not capable of watching over his own daughter.”

While speaking thus his voice changed, and he embraced me again, while I threw my arms around him.

Poor father! he has been in danger, and I knew nothing about it. He loves me, I know it, and I also love him with all my heart; but does he know it? It is here that I have seen him the most frequently, in this large, naked, and cold hall, encumbered on visiting-days by stiff groups, among whom are exchanged, furtively, sugar-plums and stolen kisses.

“Keep quiet, dear child,” continued my father, “we shall live happily together. You shall take the place of your dear mother. You shall be my good angel, and give to my life a serious purpose.”

I should have been glad to reply to my father, but madame the superior entered at this moment. I waited in silence, with downcast eyes, for the little speech imminent under these circumstances, and of which the following is a translation; for I have learnt here to understand, though not to speak, the language, which is composed chiefly of reticences and *understood*s.

“My dear child,” said she, “I return you to your father.” Here was a long pause, a sigh, and certain airs, which said clearly, “It is absolutely as if I were handing you over to the Minotaur.” She added, “I fear for you the dangers of this world, which you are not acquainted with; I should have wished to keep you still, but leave us to follow your father, and I have nothing to say.”



Which meant, "You are an ungrateful girl; we have sought to attach you to us by all the fibres of the heart, and behold you suddenly break away from all these ties."

And yet, I shall not leave without sorrow. I regret my companions and several nuns who have been kind to me, although I have never been able to become attached to those holy women. And do you know why? It is because it was necessary to call each of them my mother. Oh, that was wrong! To force a poor child to give that sacred name to a stranger,—the only name by which I can call the saint whom I invoke at all hours. Yes, I invoke my mother as a saint. I pray to her. Yes, I worship her memory.

I was very young when I lost her, but that death has not separated us. I felt that then a portion of myself, and the best part, reascended to heaven. It is thence that come my good inspirations. That holy influence sustains me and envelops me with a celestial atmosphere. My mother! I have never invoked her in vain; and if ever a danger threatened me she would come to me, she would protect and save me. But pray what are those dangers of the world, those unknown dangers which they speak to us so much about? One would think that behind the door of this sainted house legions of demons are lying in ambush. Why not point out to us those dangers towards which we are traveling? They are close by us, they are inevitable, and yet those learned women, who can inform us how Jerubbabel brought back the captives, builded the altar, and laid the foundation of the second temple, can tell us nothing of the means of escaping the terrible dangers that menace us.

Now I am going to face and brave this ocean and its storms. I am now on the open sea; for yesterday I left the port, that is to say, the convent. My large shoes, my black plush bonnet, lined with rose plush, must have cut a laughable figure in my father's elegant calash. I am now

installed at *our* house. I might say at *my* house, for my father wishes me to be the mistress of the establishment.

Never shall I be able to describe the effect of this contrast. Only yesterday, and I retired to bed in a long plastered dormitory, lighted by the lugubrious gleam of an agonizing lamp, suspended from the ceiling. To-day, here I am in a nice little sleeping-room, well and charmingly furnished, and which I can call *my* room. How can I render the value of this possessive pronoun! And I have a snug little study cabinet facing a large court, at the end of which is a charming small house, isolated, mysterious, and completely surrounded by flowers.

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## II.

JANUARY 10.

ON entering my father's house yesterday, I leaped upon the neck of Miss Dowson, recently installed in a room contiguous to mine. This excellent woman, in keeping with her dignified and equanimous character, made but slight returns of my emotions of tenderness. What a pity that with a heart like hers she is so stiff and cold, at least in appearance! Who could believe, on looking at her thus, tall, dry, yellow, and silent, with a face set in white hair, that she was the model or type of devotion?—a devotion mute and impassive, to which the greatest sacrifices cost nothing, because self-abnegation has become a part of her nature. Her great study is to keep herself on the lowest plane. She walks without noise. She makes herself impalpable because she cannot make herself small. Her body seems to have been drawn out and passed under a flattening machine. It is nothing but skin and bones. I like to dwell on her physical defects, for they seem to bring into bolder relief her excellent moral qualities.



Well, let us see. The world presents itself to me, at my first step into it, under a cheering aspect. Miss Dowson brought up my mother. It seems to me that my existence dates from the day of that terrible scene, the heart-rending picture of which is often present to my imagination. I was very young, only eight years old. I see my mother on her dying bed, young and beautiful, I see her black hair flowing around her pale, emaciated face. She calls me and puts my little hand in the bony hand of Miss Dowson, who, in a solemn voice, and with an emotion she wishes to suppress, makes a promise, the sense of which I did not understand till later in life; a promise which she still keeps, and with which my father is associated; for he has just explained to me that if he has been able to remove me to his own house, it is because my old friend, Miss Dowson, has consented to sacrifice her repose and come to occupy near me the post which she and he had sworn to confide to no other.

\* \* \* \* \*

This morning I gave to the porter my laced shoes and plush bonnet. I have selected some splendid boots at Meier's. I have ordered many flowers to be put on my new *love* of a tulle hat to be sent to me presently. To-morrow I shall have a new dress of India foulard. So now I feel myself transformed. Ah, heavens! who knows? What if some day I should become pretty? At present, I am, if not ugly, at least ungraceful, beyond a question. But patience! I have long and thick black hair, which will participate in the general unfolding and amelioration of my whole being. No one shall prevent me from giving it full play.

I am not pale enough, and have not an elegiac complexion. Ah! if I could have been blonde and *vapory*, and could easily have nervous attacks, like Mademoiselle Georgina Mailly, who *claws* when out of humor, I should have been more highly appreciated.

But, as an offset, I think I see advan-

tages which will speak for themselves,—such as a delicate nose, and eyes that are called expressive, and——

But this self-description must stop here. I have not the courage to analyze myself any further. I ought not to, and yet I would like to be beautiful, but for myself—I might say, for the satisfaction of my conscience, because it seems to me that one ought to put in the list of the duties of a woman the obligation to please, and thereby to exercise her whole influence. A woman who neglects to please those whom she ought to love, and to diffuse around her a happy and salutary influence, is a queen about to abdicate.

But I will *not* abdicate. I mean to attract and please every one about me. I have already begun my little task. I have tried to reduce Miss Dowson, but if I have had any success it is not yet apparent. She is a rock, that woman. She is like ice to all my affectionate approaches. To say that she rolls herself up into a ball, when one flatters her, would not be an exact image, because of her erect and drum-major stature; but she presents hardly anything but his asperities, even to people she loves the most, and I well know that I am one of that number. No matter; I will not be repulsed. I will bore into that rock, introduce my glycerine, and some fine day, by the aid of an electric spark, that rock shall change form.

JANUARY 16.

Ah! I have conquered a fervent and passionate admirer. It is my father. Ah, poor father! Because you saw me devour greedily the chestnuts and sugar-plums that you used to give me in the parlor of our nunnery,—because I limited myself to inquiring after the little dog, or complained of the chilblains that chapped my hands, you thought that I was a *ninny* and that I had neither heart nor intellect. Well, just let me alone and you will see.

The heart cannot have a full expansion



except on condition of a certain liberty. When you appeared, in your rare visits to the nunnery, with a distracted countenance, on which I read the traces of cares and troubles which you did not impart to me, I said nothing. Now you belong to me, I give you the warning, and there is going to be between us two a terrible struggle.

Although quite a small girl, I was more of a woman than I had the appearance of being, and I guessed,—or had a presentiment, if you prefer the expression,—of a mystery of which I shall have the key. Why that absence and sad abstraction of mind that I was speaking of just now, and which were followed by pleasant and cheerful moments, which must have a motive?

Why was my mother sometimes in tears when all alone? Why that habitual isolation? Why did she use to call me suddenly, and embrace me convulsively in silence, holding me a long time between her knees, with her hands on my shoulders, looking me steadily in the eye to the very bottom of my soul, and trying to read in my looks a certain something which disquieted me?

Perhaps she perceived death near at hand. Perhaps she felt that soon she would no longer be here to protect me, and wished to read in my soul what would become of me. Well, here I am, my good mother. I am a large and upright virtuous girl, and if I have rightly apprehended your thought I will not fail in the mission you gave me in silence.

However limited the competence of a girl may be, she has her part to perform in the family. So long as she lives remote from the paternal home she thinks little upon all those questions which have a right to occupy her attention, and the thought of which, coming suddenly upon her, transforms and matures her.

JANUARY 20.

My father wished to show me the curiosities of the capital, and the plan of

our excursion was concerted in my presence with Miss Dowson.

"We will visit," said my father, "La Sainte Chapelle, Notre Dame, and the Museum of Cluny."

"Oh!" said Miss Dowson, with that tone of voice quite Britannic, at the same time sharp and guttural, which is peculiar to her, "the Museum of Cluny!"

It seemed to me, as she uttered these words, that her cheek-bones were reddened by a blush.

"You don't like Sommerard's collection," said my father. "Very well; we will omit this, and go to the Louvre to see the galleries of painting and sculpture."

"Oh! oh!" said again Miss Dowson, "the halls of sculpture!"

"Must we omit them also? Be it so!"

We set out after giving orders to the coachman to drive to Notre Dame. On the way my father said, "What a miserable quarter of the city we are going to cross! Suppose we take, instead of it, a drive in the woods of Boulogne?"

"As you please, dear father," said I.

And that is the way in which I saw the curiosities of Paris. It is true that in the evening, in spite of the observations of Miss Dowson, I set foot for the first time in a theatre. I heard the *Dame Blanche* at the Comic Opera.

A friend of my father came to our box. His name is Mézin, Count de Mézin. He may be forty years of age. His dress is irreproachable and his manners elegant. To me he is charming. My father appears to like him very much, and I ask for nothing better than to be on good terms with him myself. Here, then, is another whom I think I shall be able to manage.

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## III.

JANUARY 26.

I HAVE a splendid idea, an idea so sublime, so admirable, that it is quite naturally destined to revolutionize the globe. The proof that I do not exaggerate is, that it has wrought a miracle at the first go-off; for it has melted the *icy* Miss Dowson, to whom I had only to suggest my idea. Without saying a word, she embraced me. I thought for a moment she was going to cry, but I was mistaken.

*Mon Dieu*, provided this idea is my own, and that nobody else has had it before me! Well,—no matter,—I shall have, at least, the merit of propagating it, and triumphing over obstacles.

And this is my discovery.

I have found the means of suppressing poverty, of relieving the poor. There shall no longer be a single poor individual either in Paris or any other place where I shall be able to make my voice heard.

Now, in order to bring this about, what is requisite? Almost nothing. It is simply necessary that all the inhabitants of the same house should unite and adopt for all one single family.

See what an imperceptible burden that imposes upon each. The proprietor offers gratis, according to the amount of his property, either an establishment for a numerous family, or a simple cabinet for an old man or an invalid.

A piece of bread taken from the daily ration of each tenant feeds the adopted family. Cast-off clothing is set aside for it. Merchants give slightly damaged goods. This bread with which I feed my poor is not the bread of legal charity; it is not the humiliating bread of alms. No, I create a bond, or tie, which brings the fortunate into connection with the unfortunate of this world. It is the old *patronage* Christianized, and almost a family tie.

"The dreams of a young girl," said my father, shaking his head with an indulgent air, when I laid my plan before him.

His words contracted my heart.

Oh! I understand, on reflecting better upon it. Men make little account of ideas which are not transformed into facts, and they are right. But patience! Let me only succeed in forming a small nucleus of persons who will consent to preach with me this crusade against poverty, and they will see my idea expand.

What? Be discouraged by a single word of opposition! That is an evidence of a cowardly heart, and I know well that mine is valiant. I will ultimate my plan.

But here is Monsieur De Mézin. I will inform him of my plan. What will *he* say to me?

He indulged in the same smile, mingled with indulgence and pity, which seems to be the response with which men receive us whenever we desire to abandon our *rôle* as mere puppets. But I did not allow him to shut himself up in this convenient silence, and called for his objections.

"I must have them," said I; "if not, I will not surrender."

"Objections?" said he, smiling; "why, they are abundant, mademoiselle. Pray do you know, in the first place, that you are preaching communism, without suspecting it?"

I did not understand, but was careful not to interrupt him. There will be time enough afterwards to know what communism is.

"And then, you know, to multiply aid is to increase the number of the poor."

"Agreed," said I, "if you speak of injudicious assistance, which encourages idleness; but I am speaking to you of the intervention of the rich in order to stimulate the zeal of those who can labor, and furnish them with work."

"Yes, I understand it,—universal fraternity; that, believe me, is a Utopian idea."

"Utopian! That is a frightful word, and I hate it instinctively. It produces upon me the effect of a large lock destined to close the door against every good idea."

For Heaven's sake, what do you know about it, whether it is Utopian or not?



Try it, at least. The plan is worth the trouble. When you shall have been everywhere repulsed, it will be time to declare yourself opposed to it.

FEBRUARY 12.

Victory! a victory rather small, but showing that I have taken one step towards the realization of the project to which I obstinately cling. It is to my father that I owe this success.

I had understood that he could not spend all his evenings with me. For the first few days he had given up his circle; but at my request he rejoined it, and the next day brought me a large ransom as the price of the liberty I had given him, namely, five hundred francs for my poor. Moreover, he has authorized me to put in practice my favorite idea. Our house will have its adopted family, but, until now, adopted by me alone. I shall devise means of uniting in one family the scattered tenants who inhabit our house in Leonia Street.

I must occupy myself with our surrounding. It is not very numerous. Above us lives a young physician, already celebrated, by the name of Paul Combes. I have seen him but very little, and yet I have contracted towards him a debt of gratitude for the devoted cares which, in my absence, he bestowed upon my father. He is absorbed in his profession, but I think I can count upon him.

At the lower end of the court is a pretty pavilion with a fine garden before it. It is occupied by an aged lady who lives alone with her son. They call her Madame Gérard. I meet her every day at mass; I salute her, and she regards me with visible interest. It appears that she lives very retired and receives no company. I love to see people present themselves every morning, as she and I both do, in the presence of God and themselves. She is extremely sympathetic towards me. There is in her manners a reserve, and a discretion full of nobleness and dignity. She and her son appear to be sufficient

for each other. If I could only find out their secret! How I should like to be *as* sufficient to my father!

They are both of them seen every day taking care of their garden and little greenhouse, in which they keep their rarest and most beautiful flowers. It is a real paradise, whose magnificence attracts my attention in spite of myself. I worship flowers, and confess that sometimes I am jealous of those who are enjoying themselves in cultivating them at the farther end of our court.

I sometimes listen, and then I hear waltzes by Chopin, fragments of Schubert, or Mozart, played on the piano with feeling and exquisite taste, by the son, George Gérard. My chambermaid told me that was his name.

I cannot think, without a little uneasiness, that if the sound of his piano reaches my ears, he must hear me also; and I dare no longer play the pieces which he executes; not only because I should not play them so well as he, but especially because I should have the appearance of opening a musical dialogue with that young man, with whom I am not acquainted.

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#### IV.

FEBRUARY 15.

THIS morning I hear a loud noise in front of my chamber window, which looks into the street.

"Cut the traces," cry several voices; "he will not be able to rise, for his leg is caught under the shaft and his head has struck on the pavement."

A brutal, wine-excited voice predominates over the voices of the by-standers, yelling, "Mind your own business; this is my affair, and I have no need of you."

And then are heard those terrible blows of the teamster's whip, which are so constantly witnessed in Paris, and which are so painful to the ear and the heart.



I promised myself never to look into the street when such scenes of cruelty are taking place. The emotions occasioned by them are useless. What assistance can I afford to those poor horses that are so frequently and unmercifully abused? I cannot even join my voice to that of persons interceding for them. If I were a man, I would rush into the street, help them to rise, relieve their sufferings, and chastise their brutal masters; I would——

But my position and my sex limit me to my window, and I might as well not be there.

Nevertheless, to-day the noise is increased in such a manner, and so great is the uproar in the street, that curiosity gets the better of me. I run to the window, open it, and from behind the partly-opened blinds I look into the street.

Oh, my God! it is frightful!

I behold, some distance from me, in the middle of the street, a heavy cart loaded with stones. The shaft-horse, a poor, old, infirm animal, hardly anything but skin and bones, has slipped, and is lying prostrate on the pavement, one of his legs is half broken. His large, white head, still intelligent in spite of suffering and old age, lies flat on the ground. Blood is gushing from his mouth, and one cannot help thinking that he sees large tears starting from his half-closed eyes.

Some of the stones in the cart, violently thrown forward by the fall, have fallen on the back of the poor creature and are pressing him down with their whole weight.

Horrible to tell, it is upon this infirm, sick, and wounded animal that this teamster is going to inflict his revengeful cruelty.

He wants him to rise immediately, and strikes him to make him do what is impossible.

Heavens, how infamous! Is it possible there are such cruel men in the world?

What! will not some policeman come and put an end to such barbarity? No, the policemen, as my father said the other

day, are never in the place where they are most needed.

Have not all these people there under my window, who see what is going on, have they not a spark of humanity about them, have they no pluck?

Standing on the sidewalk, they look on, make reflections and give advice. Meanwhile an old man has advanced and said, "You do wrong, my friend, to beat that animal." The teamster laughed in his face, and cracked his whip around his head. The old man was afraid, and soon disappeared in the crowd.

Some good souls, I ought to state, removed the stones which half covered the poor animal. Others clung on to the hind part of the cart, and endeavored to relieve the pressure upon him. But the horse suffered only the more cruelly for it. The shaft, being raised intermittingly, falls again with its whole weight on the wounded leg.

"Very well," says the teamster, "this horse seems determined not to rise. Wait a moment, and I will give him courage. As the lash of my whip does no good, I will see what virtue there is in the handle."

Then he takes his whip in both hands, and using it as a club, raises it over the horse's head.

I wish to retire from my window, as it is too painful to witness such horrors, but an invincible force attaches me to my place.

What are you doing there, you men? You must see that he is going to strike, and yet you satisfy yourselves with murmuring when you ought to act.

I call for a man of heart and courage, not only to help the horse but to chastise that brutal driver. It is not only pity that I feel, but anger and indignation.

A second more, and the whip-handle will fall upon that poor, suffering animal, which has closed his eyes and seems waiting for the blow.

I utter a shriek and a loud cry.

What! have I been heard? I think so,



for a man has just made his way through the crowd. He has sprung upon the teamster, and seizing his whip, exclaims,—

“I forbid your beating that horse!”

“What are you meddling with?” said the teamster, insolently.

“No matter. Obey my order.”

“The horse is mine, and I have a right to whip him.”

“That may be, and yet I forbid your doing it.”

“Are you one of the police?”

“No.”

“Then retire.”

“I will not.”

“Ah, has it come to this? You not of the police, and undertake to dictate to me! Very well. We shall have some fun now. We two must settle this matter.”

By a sudden movement he plucks the whip from the driver's hands, takes two steps backward, and surveys his adversary.

I from behind my window survey also the young man who has suddenly come to the rescue.

He was a man from thirty-four to thirty-six years of age, tall, thin of flesh, pale, and with very large and mild black eyes. He was very plainly dressed in black. He wore a well-fitting dress-coat, his hands were naked, but he held in his right hand a pair of gloves.

If a struggle occurs between these men it is evident that the teamster will have the best of it. For he might be called a Hercules. His wrists are enormous. He has the neck of a bullock, broad shoulders, a large, round head, upon which is planted a forest of short, thick, and straight red hair.

He is conscious of his strength, for he seems to be moved with pity towards his adversary. And after looking at him a minute, he laughed insolently in his face and said,—

“Come, clear out now, or I will give you a thrashing.”

“I defy you,” was the simple reply of the young man, crossing his arms and looking his adversary steadily in the eye.

My opinion is that, being intimidated

by this self-possession, the driver would have calmed down but for the common people, who surrounded and urged him on. He felt that he had an audience to play to.

“They will fight, they will not fight,” cries one.

“The *blouse* is afraid,” said another.

“The black coat is the bravest,” said a third.

“Hurra for the coat!”

Then the teamster, being thus spurred on by the crowd, roars and swears and rushes headlong upon his adversary.

The latter, at the moment when this *lump* or *mass* was about to hit him full in the breast, leaps nimbly to one side, and the driver, obeying his acquired momentum, falls heavily upon the pavement by the side of his horse.

“Bravo! bravo!” shout the *gamins*. For them there is no longer any *blouse* or *coat*. They see only the victor and applaud him.

But the man has risen again.

Blinded by anger and mad with rage, he feels in his pocket, draws a knife, and advances.

“Take care, take care,” they now cry out on all sides, “he will kill you! He is armed! Escape! That's not fair! down with the knife! Arrest him!”

“Let him alone,” said the young man, with a pleasant smile.

When the driver, renewing his attack, raises his armed hand, the young man quietly unfolds his arms, extends them, seizes the wrists of his adversary, shakes them violently to get rid of the knife, which falls to the ground, and then deliberately, without haste, as if it were a gymnastic exercise, whilst the astonished crowd applauds, he twists the wrists of the miserable wretch with such muscular force, and crushes his bones with such vigor, that distracted, fainting, and entirely subjected, he begins to cry out,—

“*Pardon!*”

Then the conqueror, still smiling, drags his victim near to his horse, and points to him:



"Did you pardon or show any mercy to him?" said he. "You were his superior, possibly, and you beat him and abused him. Now, down upon your knees, and ask pardon,—not of that poor animal, which cannot understand you maybe, but of God, whom you have offended by maltreating one of his creatures. Come, down upon your knees!"

The man is disposed to resist; but, under the slow pressure of him who holds his wrists, his arms bend, his legs give way, his body trembles, and he falls on his knees.

Then the young man opens his hands, lets go his adversary, and the latter, conquered and submissive, slowly rises.

Applause and cheers are heard from all sides, and I from behind my window-blinds could not help crying out *bravo!*

Did that young man hear me? It seemed to me that he lifted towards me his gentle and melancholy eye.

But his task is not yet finished. He approaches the teamster, still dejected and trembling, and says to him,—

"Are those horses and that cart yours?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; I will buy the horse which you have just been abusing. He is not worth two hundred francs, but I will give you three hundred. I am not willing that you should avenge yourself on this poor beast, by-and-by, for the treatment I have made you undergo. Do you consent?"

"I must obey, sir," said the man, who had suddenly become polite. "How can you be resisted?"

"Now then to the work, and I will help you. Lend us a hand here, men," addressing himself to the spectators.

In a moment the cart is raised up, and the horse, disengaged from his heavy harness and helped by ten arms, slowly rises.

His new owner whispers a word in the ear of one of the boys around him, slips a piece of money into his hand, and the animal, escorted by the lad, goes slowly away, dragging his bruised leg along with him, and the crowd disperses.

The teamster harnesses one of his draft-horses to the shaft, and the young man, still unassuming and quiet, soon disappears in the direction taken by the horse.

I could not help thinking that the poor creature turned his head round once in a while to look at his benefactor. Who knows but he was conscious of what had just taken place? Who shall say that animals have not souls and reasoning powers? Who will contend that they are not immortal?

I will not attempt, at present, to solve this great question. I am still excited by the scene I have just witnessed, and full of admiration for manly physical power exerted in the accomplishment of a good object.

What a change is this in me, who formerly thought physical strength useless in a fashionable man!

I was wrong. To be strong, and not appear to be so; to be strong, under elegant and distinguished personal appearance, is grand!

Who, pray, *is* that young man?

I should like at least to know his name. For he is good, brave, and generous.

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NOTE.—The preceding chapter will not be without interest to all who would like to see punished, in one way or another, all who are unmerciful to dumb animals. The hero of this novel, as has been seen, takes the law into his own hands; and it is hoped that other young men, who are fearless and physically powerful like him, whenever they witness cruelty to animals, will not wait for law or policemen, but proceed immediately to the relief of the animal and the chastisement of the offender. Public opinion will be sure to bear them out in it. Will not young ladies everywhere encourage their brave and athletic male friends to imitate the example of this hero?—*Translator.*

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## V.

FEBRUARY 19.

FINALLY I know who he is.

I was going out with Miss Dowson, when I noticed a person who, standing before the porter's lodge, seemed to be asking for information. He turned his back to me, but I was sure I had seen that figure somewhere.

Suddenly he turns round. It is he! the unknown. I cannot be mistaken. He raises his hat and steps aside to let me pass. I proceed on with Miss Dowson.

What does this mean? What does he come here for?

Soon after, on returning, assuming an air of indifference, I said to the keeper,—

"It is well understood, is it not, that you are not to let, without informing me, the little vacant apartment in the fifth story? I shall perhaps have need of it for my poor."

"I have not let it, mademoiselle. I understood you."

"I was afraid a little while ago that you had. For a gentleman was talking with you when I went out, and I suspected he wanted to hire of you."

"Oh, no occasion for anxiety, mademoiselle, he is already living on the establishment, and is your tenant at the end of the court, Monsieur Gérard, Monsieur George Gérard, who occupies with his mother the little pavilion."

"You relieve me," said I with a smile, in order to conceal my surprise, and I retired.

Ah, that is Monsieur Gérard! I am glad of it; his mother is very kindly disposed towards me, and must be very happy with such a son."

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Alas, my efforts are in vain! My father is very prodigal away from home. I have done everything to restrain him and please him, but I must confess to myself that I have failed. My first efforts were so successful! I cultivated his affection for me. This affection has not diminished, but I

have felt that conversation between him and me was gradually becoming more and more difficult.

I thought that the remembrance of my mother would be a sacred bond between us; but when I evoke her memory, it seems that I awake a remorse in my father; for he frowns, is silent, looks at the ceiling, and soon closes the conversation in his usual way. He takes his hat and goes out. I watch for his return, and often sit up to a late hour of the night. He scolds me, and does not wish me to wait for him thus. I see, with grief, that he comes home agitated and uneasy.

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## VI.

MARCH.

My grotto continues to resound with the songs of my neighbor. Evidently he has more than one talent, for he whips teamsters with the hand of a master, and modulates on his piano, with exquisite grace, the most touching airs. He is a cooing dove; but, in time of need, a roaring lion.

It is no use to talk. I must go and call on his mother, since I have announced my visit; and yet this visit intimidates me somewhat.

After all, the question is about a good work, and the poor, whom we ought to take under our protection, should not suffer from my foolish timidity. Where shall we go to find them? Madame Gérard has hers, and I have mine; but I am becoming difficult to please. I would not like to have any of the poor who belong to public or private benefaction, and whose poverty has become a habit, I might say almost a profession.

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MARCH 10.

I HAVE just summoned up my courage, and, with Miss Dowson on my arm, have



been to make my visit to Madame Gérard. Her garden and greenhouse are charming. It is impossible to bring together within a limited space plants more wonderful and group them with more taste. People who can be thus fond of flowers cannot have a bad heart. I was afraid of meeting with Monsieur George Gérard, but he did not appear. I am sorry, however, not to have been able to see him nearer, to have talked with him a few moments.

I had decided to be very agreeable to his mother, and think I succeeded. The beginning of our conversation was replete with kind feeling.

"It is very obliging in you, mademoiselle," said Madame Gérard, "to think of those who are suffering,—in *you*, I say, on whom everything smiles, and who would be so excusable if you permitted yourself to be absorbed by the pleasures of your age."

"Do you think, madame, that it is not a pleasure, and the liveliest of all, to seek to relieve suffering and misery? Why, at this very moment, I feel already rewarded for this idea, since it affords me the great pleasure of talking with you."

"All the pleasure is on my side, mademoiselle; for I live alone, avoid the world, and have decided to admit into my retreat only one sort of diversions, which you have the good taste to appreciate viz., to do a little good. My very sad life can have no other joys."

"Very sad, do you say? Why, just now, while crossing this garden which you have made an *oasis*, I said to myself that, surrounded as you are by beautiful flowers, and living quietly far from the cares of the world, one ought to breathe the air of paradise."

"You are right, mademoiselle, and I am ungrateful to Providence. I am everything to my son, and he is all the world to me. We are absorbed in each other, to the extent of making it a law for ourselves to see no one and to have no friends."

"I think you do wrong to impose on

yourself this isolation without necessity."

"Without necessity, say you?"

Hereupon the features of the poor lady were contracted, and I saw the tears start. She then, with some effort, replied,—

"Without *necessity*, as you say; it is a caprice, but it is stronger than our will."

Her voice failed her, and I felt that I had been indiscreet, that I had unskillfully touched a tender chord; and so I suddenly changed the subject of conversation.

I wished to atone for my awkwardness, and find a topic of remark that might be more agreeable to this poor woman. At the risk of not appearing sufficiently reserved, I made an allusion to her son, as that was the only means of putting myself on a footing that would certainly be agreeable to her.

"Are you fond of music, madame?" said I.

"Very; but I regret that I cannot make any."

"That is perhaps a better condition for enjoying its charms. An unknown landscape often affects us more agreeably than one that is familiar. Your favorite authors, I believe, are Chopin and Beethoven."

She appeared surprised at this remark. I saw that I had gone too far. I blushed, rose, and left a little confused.

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## VII.

MARCH 23.

MON DIEU! what is going on? My father has just entered my room, and said, in a manner which he endeavored to render calm,—

"Marcelle, do you happen to have in your desk any thousand-franc bills lying about which you have no use for? If you have, please give them to me, as I have immediate use for them."

These words went to my heart. That



mystery that I wished to know I no longer wish for, I no longer dare to investigate. I see only one thing,—my father has an urgent need of money, and does not think it his duty to tell me why, and it is not permitted me to ask him.

I have, indeed, some money in one of my drawers, but that money is not mine, as it belongs to my poor. It is not only destined for them, but it has been promised them. They rely upon this resource, and if it should fail what will become of them? Nevertheless, I do not hesitate, and hand over to my father my little treasure. He goes out, and at the end of a couple of hours returns to give me the information that I was far from expecting. "I am going," said he, "to spend two or three days at Hombourg. I leave you with Miss Dowson, who will try to make you forget my absence." Immediately he rings for his servant, gives him orders and departs.

And here I am alone. I have frightful presentiments. A journal falls into my hands, and I see in it, on the fourth page, among the advertisements:

"Hombourg. The administration offers to travelers the advantages accorded to the most favored establishments."

I do not understand. What urgent business can call my father to Hombourg, where he is not acquainted with any one?

Oh, it is cruel to be a woman,—to be useless, to be powerless!

Why did God give us a heart, if it is to repress all our feelings, and not even know what is passing around us? How is it that when we ask only to devote ourselves, we are not judged worthy of knowing the trouble from which they suffer whom we love the most?

What is that shameful and cruel *rôle* to which young girls are destined or condemned? Let us see, let us see; I wish to understand it, I want to get at the secret of our destiny. It is impossible that God has placed us upon the earth in order to condemn us to this passive condition,—that he has said to us, "You shall suffer,

and you shall not know why. You shall have noble instincts and high aspirations, but you shall not be able to satisfy them, inasmuch as you are bound to know nothing and to do nothing."

MARCH 26.

I breathe more freely. My father has returned. I know not whether he is satisfied with his journey, but I have him now under my hand, and it seems to me he can no more escape me. I was wrong to be so frightened. This journey, after all, was not long, and solitude has not been a bad thing for me. It has given me clearer ideas on many things.

One thing troubles me, however. My father does not speak of the money I lent him, and I feel some shame and remorse when I think I shall not be able to keep my promise to my poor. I shall not dare to go and see them.

\* \* \* \* \*

What my father has just done is charming and full of delicacy. For several days I have really suffered on account of my poor. But it was necessary to decide to go up and see them, though with empty hands. The first I met astonished me by addressing me thanks, which I at first thought ironical. But not so; he had actually received the promised sum.

"And who brought it to you?" I asked.

"A very distinguished gentleman, who lives on your premises, mademoiselle."

On my second visit, the same thanks, astonishment, and explanations.

It did not require a long time to understand that my father had found a delicate method of returning the money he had borrowed of me. I leaped with joy. Not only was I square with my creditors, but I found my father such a man as I wish always to find him.

I had hoped that Madame Gérard would return my call, for I should have liked to see her during those days I remained alone, but nobody came. But she had told me plainly that she wished



for neither friends nor acquaintances. This misanthropy is sad. She must have suffered very much. But why condemn her son to this life of seclusion? That is a singular trait of character. It is very strange, and to be regretted. I should have liked this lady very much.

I kept watching for my father. As soon as I was able to see him,—which was not very easy, he comes home so seldom,—I sprang to his arms, saying,—

“Thanks! you have made me very happy. What a fine surprise you have effected, and how well you have kept your secret! So you were watching me, in order to become acquainted with my poor and be able to carry to them the money I had promised them? Miss Dowson has assured me it was not she who gave you the necessary information.”

“What do you mean?” said my father. “Of what poor do you speak, and of what surprise? I declare to you that I do not understand one word of what you are telling me. No, my dear Marcelle; unfortunately it was not I who carried money to your poor. I have in these latter days serious troubles. Pardon me, my child; I have a great deal of anxiety.”

He left me after these painful words, and I remained crushed and filled with consternation.

So I was not mistaken. My father suffers, my father is unhappy, and I can do nothing for him!

By the way, who, pray, can have taken it upon himself to help my poor in my name? A gentleman living in our house, they say. Monsieur Paul Combes, perchance. No, a physician does good in another way; he visits the sick, he—Then, if it is not my father, if it is not Monsieur Paul Combes, it is—It must be so, as there is no other tenant in the house. Yes, it is he, it is Monsieur George Gérard; I cannot doubt it. But in order to know who my poor are, he must have watched and have followed

me. Ah! that was very naughty. I did not expect that from him.

APRIL 10.

I see my father less and less. He sleeps all the morning, and often at two o'clock in the afternoon he is not up. Why go to bed so late? They must enjoy themselves very much at his club. When scarcely dressed he leaves, to return only about a quarter of an hour before dinner. At table he tries to talk and to animate the conversation, but his mind is not with us. He appears absent-minded and restless. Pray, what is the matter with him? Oh, I would give everything in the world to know!

At half-past eight Count De Mézin is announced. He has been in the habit, for the last month, of coming to see us every day. Formerly, after saluting me and inquiring after my health, he used to retire to my father's room and go out with him. But now he stays at least a good hour in the drawing-room.

He talks, tells the news, is especially polite to me, and I endeavor to be so to him, in order to detain him as long as possible, that is, to retain his friend. But it is a difficult thing. About half-past nine my father rises from his arm-chair and says to Monsieur De Mézin, “You forget, my friend, that they are waiting for us. Are you going?”

Monsieur De Mézin, who cannot remain alone with me, is obliged to follow his friend. Soon I retire, and hear no more of my father till two o'clock the next day.

## VIII.

APRIL 13.

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MADAME GÉRARD has not entirely forgotten me. I have just received from her a magnificent bouquet of moss-roses. This souvenir has afforded me great pleasure, but I still hold a grudge against her son.



And yet, what would have become of my poor had it not been for him? No matter. One ought not to follow people to see what they are doing.

I have put into my hair one of the flowers of the bouquet. My neighbor will see me perhaps at my window. That will be one way of thanking her.

Suppose I should return to her house! No. In that case I should doubtless meet with Monsieur Gérard, and I should present to him a bad face. When I get over my angry fit, we shall see; to-morrow, perhaps.

\* \* \* \* \*

APRIL 16.

But he is not guilty. I have absolutely nothing to reproach him with. I have been unjust to him. It is all very simple; and I cannot explain to myself how I could have been silly enough to accuse this young man of following me and watching my conduct.

This is what took place.

The two families which I am trying secretly to protect were, some days ago, represented to Madame Gérard as worthy of attention. Feeling ill and unable to go out, she commissioned Monsieur Gérard to carry assistance in her place.

The unfortunates on whom he called, on the part of his mother, asked for the name of their benefactress. On account of his modesty he was not willing to give it, but gave to understand that she lived in Leonia Street. As these good people already knew that I lived in that street, they quite naturally supposed that Monsieur Gérard was my agent, and the idea did not occur to them that they had two protectresses instead of one. So he was guilty of no indiscretion in regard to me. He did not even know that I was in the cause, and thought probably very little about me.

He meddle with other people's business! He follow and watch people! What nonsense! He is quite too timid for that.

Yes, *timid*. That seems extraordinary,

after what I saw from my window. But he obeyed then a sentiment of compassion and justice, and could not suppress his indignation. He departed for a moment from his natural character.

I noticed that after his scene with the teamster he cast an almost frightened glance around him. One might have said that he felt ashamed of having exhibited himself as he did, and that he was afraid he had been recognized by one of the persons who were looking at him.

I decided the other day to make another call on Madame Gérard. Could I delay any longer to thank her for her bouquet, and had I not promised her a visit?

Miss Dowson accompanied me. But the servant-girl who introduced us was at first unwilling to receive us. It seems that she is forbidden to allow strangers to enter the retreat of her master and mistress. But she remembered having already seen us, knows that I live on the same premises, and therefore soon appeared more accommodating.

"Please walk into the parlor," said she, "and I will announce you to madame."

We entered, and I found myself suddenly in the presence of Monsieur Gérard, whom the servant thought, undoubtedly, in another room.

On seeing us, he rose suddenly from the sofa on which he was lying, and stammered some words of excuse. He was evidently confused and fretted at being thus unexpectedly surprised. He recovered himself, however, requested us to be seated, and was about to go for his mother, when the latter entered the parlor.

During the conversation which we four had together, and which lasted nearly an hour, I had an opportunity to make some observations on Monsieur Gérard.

He puzzles me a little, I must confess. I am astonished at his mysterious and unoccupied existence at thirty years of age, for he cannot be much more than that, and at his sedentary life, which is inconsistent with the extraordinary strength which he displayed the other day under



my own eyes, and which is not met with ordinarily, my father told me, except in men who live in the open air and are engaged in physical or corporeal labors.

If he seldom goes out, which they say is the case; if his time is spent in this parlor where I found him, and in the garden which I can see from my windows, how can he have that brown, tanned complexion which one sees so rarely in Paris? Has he perchance lived a long time in the south of France or America?

And then, there is in his whole person something sad, indicative of suffering. He talks but little, and in a very soft and timorous voice, so to speak, as they do in the convent during study hours; for fear of being reprimanded.

If the conversation interests him, and he becomes animated, his voice is suddenly accented, and his eyes, which he kept downcast, are raised, his look becomes frank and loyal, and he is no longer the same man.

His gait is usually languishing, or flagging. He walks like a man feeling his way, with his head down, back curved; and then suddenly he straightens up and holds himself as much more erect as he was just before bent over. One would say that he was trying to correct himself of a bad habit.

When he consents to speak, he expresses himself in excellent terms, and says things very just and often elevated.

His conversation resembles in no respect that of Monsieur De Mézin. As much as the latter is sportive and trivial, so much does George Gérard show himself calm and serious. The one talks in order to say something, no matter what; the other to express his thoughts. We *hear* the one, but *listen* to the other. It is evident to my mind that our neighbor's son must have lived a good deal in solitude, sole alone with himself, having no other amusement but to reflect upon great questions, debate them in his mind, and solve them perhaps.

I have said he must have suffered. One

would hardly believe it, as he shows himself so indulgent and kind. We naturally spoke of the poor and unfortunate. But he did not use one of those common remarks which Monsieur De Mézin constantly indulged in, such as, "There are no poor but such as wish to be so. Everybody can work. To give alms is to encourage idleness, and lift it into a profession." Monsieur Gérard, on the contrary, maintains that many of the unfortunate have struggled and labored energetically, and have applied for public charity only when they could not avoid it.

"Everybody cannot work," said he. "Among those shut off from labor, we must reckon the sick, the infirm, the discouraged, and those who have formerly committed some fault, who have been punished for crime, and whom society rejects. All these unfortunate ones ought to be helped, without asking whether their infirmities are the result of vice, or the faults they have committed are deserving of eternal reprobation."

Ah, what generous, noble thoughts!

It afforded me great pleasure to hear Monsieur Gérard express himself in this way. And while he was speaking, his mother appeared so happy! I feel very seriously attracted towards her, and am gradually becoming attached to her. I rejoice in her joys. Perhaps this sympathy and this sort of attraction come from the fact that Madame Gérard reminds me of my mother. She has the same look, the same smile, and the same extraordinary sweet tone of voice. She has made a conquest of me, and if I were not afraid of being indiscreet I should go to see her often. But have I a right to disturb the solitude with which my neighbors seem to be pleased?

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## IX.

APRIL 22.

MANY things which have astonished me in Monsieur Gérard are quite naturally explained. He must have been a naval officer. In the first place, Madame Gérard happened to say once in my presence, that she had been separated from her son a long time. That is quite natural; he was at sea. Again, that swarthy complexion that struck me; that bodily strength which active life and sea air must impart; that slow and *dragging* step of the sailor, whose promenade is very limited; that habit of lowering the head and bending the back acquired between decks; and especially that reflective character, those continual reveries, that constant melancholy, that elevation of thought, evidently peculiar to men living in comparative isolation, far from all worldly pleasures, incessantly exposed to great dangers, and having before their eyes only the immensity of the sea and the sky.

\* \* \* \* \*

MAY 3.

Somebody rapped at the door of my room to-day about noon, and I said, "Walk in." It was my father, whom I had not seen since yesterday.

He would not sit down, as I wished him to; but, after inquiring after my health, said to me hastily, as if in a hurry to get through,—

"Monsieur De Mézin has just asked me for your hand in marriage. What do you say to that?"

Petrified by this blunt attack and this unexpected news, I made no reply; my father continued as follows,—

"Mézin is an excellent man, well situated in the world, has a good name, and a handsome fortune. He appears to love you in good earnest. I ought to have discovered it sooner, for his friendship for me has increased ever since you left the convent. But Mézin is only five or six years younger than I; and, accustomed

to regard him as a friend, I have never thought that he might become my son-in-law. In spite of his forty, or forty-five years, he still appears very young. He is good-tempered, and would endeavor to make you happy. From other motives which I will not mention, and which ought not to influence your decision, I would see this marriage with pleasure. But my duty at present is to inform you of the request, to favor it without insisting too much, and to request you to answer. Examine at your leisure. I leave you to your reflections."

He kissed me, and left without adding a single word.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am bewildered. What! Monsieur De Mézin! Never should I have thought— And I appeared so amiable towards him! He may have thought—

I used to beg of him to prolong his visits, and would say to him,—

"What makes you in such a hurry? Wait a little longer."

I retained him in order to keep my father. He did not see that my amiability was not personal to him.

And now he asks for my hand, and if I refuse it he will accuse me of coqueting. He will have a falling out perhaps with my father, who appears to take so much pleasure in his company. And yet I cannot marry him! Oh, no; I cannot even think of it! In the first place, I do not like him. But do I know? In order to know that I don't love him, it would first be necessary— No, no, he is not my type, he is not—

My type? Who, pray, is he? Can it be— Why, no— What am I thinking of, when the question is about Monsieur De Mézin? It is of him only that I am *required* to think now.

Very well. The answer required from me is all ready; I refuse.

But my father told me he should regard this marriage with pleasure, for reasons he could not give me.

What reasons?



Ah, *mon Dieu!* if what I have thought for several days is true; if I have not been mistaken as to the causes of my father's absent-mindedness and sadness; if he has experienced some great pecuniary loss; if he is a ruined man! he is thinking perhaps of separating from me, of taking another establishment, or of leaving the country, and wishes to marry me off as quick as possible.

But *I* am rich. He told me that I had a large dowry. I will give it to him with all my heart. He shall remain with me; *he* shall make no change in his life, and *I* will not marry Monsieur De Mézin.

Yes, I am rich, I had never thought of that; but *now*, I cannot help— Ah! that is naughty in me! That gentleman has never done anything to make me think he is selfish. It is quite enough to refuse his hand, without also—

And yet I have the right, when the question is about so grave a matter, to stop at the suppositions which come into my mind. Monsieur De Mézin does not love me, and he cannot. He expresses himself too lightly on all subjects to have any serious, honest sentiments; and if he asks for my hand, it is evidently—

No, something tells me that the question is about my father and of his interests. In our conversation soon after my leaving the convent, at the time when we passed a good part of the day together, he gave me to understand that he had on the subject of my marriage certain fixed ideas, and which would realize hopes entertained formerly by my mother. Monsieur De Mézin cannot have any connection with those hopes. If my father communicated to me his request, it was because he was constrained to do so. It was because his interests, his existence perhaps, are at stake.

Is it not, therefore, my duty to sacrifice myself? Ah! I know not what to think, what to say, or what to answer. Who will advise me?

Miss Dowson. Why did not I think

sooner to take counsel of her who brought up my mother, who was her confidante and friend, with whom she often spoke of me?

Poor Miss Dowson! She is so silent in her little corner, and makes so little noise, that she is never thought of. I will go to her.

I entered, took a stool, and placed it near her arm-chair. I sat down and related to her everything my father had just told me.

From the first words she raised her head, interrupted her embroidery, which she keeps constantly in her hand, and listened to me attentively.

When I asked her her opinion, she said to me these words,—

“*Mariage impossible!*”

“Why?” asked I.

“*Impossible!*” she repeated.

“Dear Miss Dowson,” said I then, in order to frighten her, and induce her to explain herself, “if you do not give me better reasons, I shall think you have none, and shall carry to my father the answer which he is waiting for and desires.”

“Is that so?” asked she.

“Doubtless.”

“Will you marry the count?”

“If you do not tell me why I ought not to marry him.”

“Would not the request or prayer that I might address to you be sufficient?”

“It might for the moment. But if my father should address to me another, perhaps then his would prevail over yours.”

“Ah!” said she. “Then the time is come. I cannot hesitate.”

She arose in silence, went to an old piece of furniture which she uses as a writing-desk, and opened it with a key which she always carries suspended from her neck. Then she took a small red morocco pocket-book, drew from it a black, sealed letter, and handed it to me, saying only these words,—

“Read; it is from your mother.”



I took the letter respectfully, bade adieu to Miss Dowson, and, after shutting myself up in my room, I broke the seal and read.

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X.

I TRANSCRIBE the whole of this letter, that it may be better impressed on my heart.

"I have but a few more days to live, my beloved daughter, and I wish to consecrate them to you. I wish to talk with you incessantly and open to you my whole heart and soul, not to the child that you now are and of course incapable of understanding me, but to the young woman that you will hereafter be. The malady from which I now suffer, and of which I am going to die, will not permit me to write this letter at one sitting, for my pen would fall more than once from my hand; but I shall resume it courageously, conquer my pain, and go on to the completion of my task.

"Meanwhile, I address to heaven the most fervent prayers that this task may be useless, and that this letter may never fall into your hands. This is my most ardent desire. My friend and sister, Miss Dowson, the only confidante of my deepest and most secret thoughts, will give it to you only when she sees that you are in real danger and your future exposed to perils that I would have you shun, and which experience, alas! has taught me to know but too well. The circumstances must be very grave and the danger imminent, for you to be called upon to read these lines, in which I shall have occasion more than once to judge and blame the conduct of him whom I have loved the most after you.

"Soon after marriage with your father, about ten years ago, I accompanied him to Italy.

"This journey lasted three months, and

was charming. It was the happiest period of my life, and I recur to it in memory with the greatest pleasure.

"I remember that I was greatly amused by the astonishment and admiration evinced by Monsieur De Brives.

"‘You have probably never traveled,’ said I.

"‘Yes, a good deal.’

"‘I should never have suspected it,’ said I, laughing. ‘When we enter a museum, one might safely say that you look upon pictures for the first time. And the aspect of the sea excites in you ecstasies altogether new. Pray, what countries have you visited?’

"‘Well, Germany, for instance, several times.’

"‘And yet there are museums in Germany.’

"He ended by confessing that of Germany he was acquainted only with the watering-places, such as Baden, Hombourg, Wiesbaden, and others. I did not know as yet what charms these places had for him.

"In my simplicity I imagined he was attracted thither by the beauty of some landscape or the society to be met with. But I was soon enlightened on the subject. Scarcely had we returned to Paris, when your father proposed to travel again.

"‘In your favorite countries,’ said I; ‘in Germany, doubtless?’

"‘If you wish it.’

"‘I wish what pleases you,’ said I, and we departed.

"The evening of our arrival at Baden, Monsieur De Brives took me to a place they call Casino, Kursaal, or conversation hall, as you please. I had occasion afterwards of becoming familiar with all these names. There was a theatre. The Comédie Française was enacting one of its best pieces. Your father, after seating me in an arm-chair, and remaining some minutes near me, asked of me permission to go and smoke a cigar on the promenade, promising to rejoin me soon.

"At the end of one hour he had not



returned; at half-past ten, the play ended, and I was still alone. What was to become of me? Return to my hotel? I did not know the name of it. As I was consulting with myself, I perceived that at the end of the gallery where the comedy had been given there were saloons towards which many persons seemed to be tending. I followed them, and soon entered a hall rather dimly lighted. Strange sounds attracted my attention. One might have thought they were occasioned by the moving about of piles of gold and silver. At the same time I heard phrases like the following,—

“‘Play, gentlemen;’ and a moment after, ‘The red loses,’ etc.

“I couldn’t understand it, and was the more confused as I could not see anything. A compact crowd was standing in the middle of the hall, and seemed to surround the place whence those noises came.

“Gradually, however, curiosity helping, I mustered courage to follow a lady making her way through the crowd on the arm of her husband, and I slipped in behind them. I was enabled then to discover an immense green table.

“My eyes fell first on the centre of the table. Four individuals, grave, cool, clothed in black, were seated on big stools. One had cards in his hand, and was shuffling them over before him. A second was arranging silver and gold in a large box with compartments. The two others kept moving about, right and left, on the table, large racks, by which they brought in bank-bills and pieces of money of all countries.

“Around these gentlemen, seated close together, were to be seen some fifty persons of both sexes, whose sole occupation seemed to consist in pushing out in front of them sums of money, which the *racks*, or rakes, immediately took from them, or else in pricking with pins small pieces of pasteboard, on which were inscribed two letters of the alphabet, N and R, the first in black, the second in red ink.

“If I give you, my dear Marcelle, these

details which you have nothing to do with, it is because they are engraved on my mind in indelible characters. From this fatal evening date all my sorrows, and I cannot forget anything connected with it. My thought reverts incessantly to the spectacle I am trying to describe to you. Things the most insignificant appear to me as if I saw them still; and even while I write, I think I hear murmuring in my astonished ear those words so new to it, ‘*Play, gentlemen, play,*’ etc.

“A moment’s reflection sufficed to dissipate my astonishment and to understand what was going on before me.

“Educated in a convent, and married soon after leaving it, I was on many points ignorant and simple, but this ignorance had certain limits. I had seen card-playing, and learnt the use that might be made of it. I was looking around me and trying to understand the progress of the play, and to explain to myself why some lost and others gained, when these words struck my ear,—

“‘*Maximum à la rouge.*’

“At these words a certain movement was made in the crowd of spectators, and I profited by it in order to take a step forward. I found myself thus in the front rank, standing behind the players, and saw your father seated in front of me.

“Before him was displayed a quantity of gold and bank-bills. With his head down, and forehead in his hand, he was looking with surprising steadiness at the cards which one of the four persons of whom I have spoken turned up on the table.

“By a frown and gesture I understood that he had just lost. At the same time a young woman near me said to her neighbor,—

“‘You will see that Monsieur De Brives will lose all that he has won.’

“‘Instead of stopping,’ said one, ‘I am sure that he has more than a hundred and sixty thousand francs before him, and he began to play with ten thousand.’

“‘So,’ continued the young woman, ‘the bank does not seem to be uneasy.’



It knows his habits, and knows that he is one of the most obstinate and persistent gamblers in the world. Every year at Baden, Hombourg, and Wiesbaden, I see him gain considerable sums, and yet he returns to Paris empty-handed.'

"So it was not chance which had led your father to this gaming-table; he had been drawn to it by habit, urged on by an irrepressible passion. He was known as a gambler, and his name was known. He had acquired a reputation at the watering-places. He would risk in one evening hundreds of thousands of francs. He was the principal character at this gaming-table. All eyes were fixed upon him. They studied his physiognomy. He was the preferred man of the bank, and received the greatest attention. Instead of a common seat, they gave him an arm-chair.

"I understood now the astonishment of Monsieur De Brives in front of a beautiful picture, or in presence of a magnificent landscape. He had never had the time to study the arts and admire nature. A green carpet, cards and gold, were all he needed to satisfy his imagination and delight his eyes. He asked for no other view, no wider horizon.

"I could now see why we had returned so soon to Paris, and why three months had sufficed to visit all Italy. It was because the watering-places were waiting for him. Baden and Hombourg claimed him.

"My prevision did not deceive me. Your father lost in a few minutes some forty thousand francs.

"I had my eyes fixed upon him; but absorbed in gambling, he did not see me. Suddenly, at last, he raised his head and threw a glance around him.

"I have learnt since what he was looking for. I think he told me himself. Superstitious as all gamblers are, he had just said to himself that some one among the spectators would be the cause of misfortune or bad luck to him, and he was trying to discover who it might be.

"When he saw me his cheeks colored up. He thought, doubtless, I was still in the theatre, and was ashamed at being thus taken by surprise. Perhaps he had hoped to conceal from me for a long time yet his terrible vice, and he blushed to see it revealed so suddenly and in so manifest a manner.

"He had tried to smile, but my troubled look had given him to understand what I was suffering. He held down his head, and as one of the bankers asked him to announce his stake, or play, he put some bank-bills on the table. He lost them and several more.

"At times he seemed desirous of putting his money in his pocket and of rising from the table, but an invincible force fastened him to his seat.

"He continued playing, never resting, occupied only with throwing gold and bank-bills upon the table, which the banker immediately swept off.

"Finally he had no longer anything before him.

"He rose from the table; and, as if they were waiting for this moment to stop the play, the banker and the other gamblers rose also. It was eleven o'clock and some minutes.

"Then your father came to me, offered me his arm in silence, and we proceeded to our hotel.

"When, a half-hour after, we were alone he said to me,—

"I beg your pardon, Marcelle, for having left you thus all the evening. But chance led me to the gambling-table, where I risked some money. Fortune favored me at first, as you may have noticed, and I was tempted to play longer than I would have wished.'

"I answered without weakness,—

"What you put to the account of chance ought to be attributed to habit. You took me to Baden because you could not leave me alone in Paris at the end of three months' marriage. You came here with the intention of gambling. You deserted me this evening to go to the



gambling-room, where you are known by everybody as a gambler.'

"He saw that it would be useless to deny it; and besides, falsehood was always repugnant to your father. True, he has caused me to suffer a great deal, but I recognize in him great and beautiful qualities. The heart is not connected with his errors. That he has preserved excellent and unchanged. All the faults he may have committed against me are only the consequence of his unique and fatal passion.

"'I do not know,' said he, after a moment's reflection, 'how you learned, or guessed, what you have just said to me, but I will not lie. People have not deceived you, or rather, you have not been mistaken in the judgment passed on me. It is true that I love gambling. I have tried every way to conquer this injurious habit, but have not been able to succeed. When I have remained for some time without touching cards, my blood boils, my head is on fire, my nervous system is unnaturally excited, and I am sick. I have the gambler's fever, as journalists have the printer's fever. They would die if they could no longer smell the odor of damp proof-sheets.

"'Balls, concerts, theatres, have no attraction for me. In the winter I enjoy nothing but my club. In the summer nothing pleases me but the watering-places. I had hoped, my dear, to conceal from you for a long time yet this sad passion, but chance has taught you the whole. I am sorry for it, but I think it wise to make a clean breast in this matter, and to have a full understanding of the case. Why did I marry you? How did the idea of asking you to become my wife occur to me whose ruling passion is gambling? These are questions you will naturally ask. The answer is very simple: I *loved* you. But how could the sentiment of love find a time to enter my heart? I cannot say. I thought perhaps that you might be to me both a remedy and salvation. In your company

I hoped to become another man, to subdue my dominant passion, and consecrate myself wholly to your happiness. I call heaven to witness that this was my most ardent desire. But it has not been realized. I love you as in the beginning, and feel for you a tenderness which nothing can change. I am ready to make to you every sacrifice but one. Take me as I am. Do not waste your energy in a useless struggle against my dominant vice. You cannot conquer it; but I will endeavor to make you forget it by my respect, love, and devotion.'

"He told me all these unreasonable things in a serious and affecting tone of voice, and I well understood that there was no reply to be made,—no further reasoning, no more endeavors for his reform.

"I see myself still, sad and desolate, sitting in an arm-chair near the fireplace, and listening to him in silence.

"Suddenly I arose, advanced towards him, and, taking his hands in mine, said,—

"'But we may have children. Have you thought of our children?'

"'Of course I have. But how can they suffer from my errors? When they shall be old enough to understand them, it is to be hoped that I shall have reformed.'

"'But suppose you have ruined them, and that they find themselves in poverty?'

"'Ah, never! never! The worst that can happen is that I may lose all I possess, but I solemnly swear never to touch your property.'

"He kept his word.

"Many times since this scene have I seen him under cruel pecuniary embarrassments; but never has it entered his mind, I feel sure of it, to ask me for my signature or to suggest an alienation of my rights.

"So, my dear child, if I write you this letter, it is not to entreat you to be as firm as I certainly should have been, had it been necessary. It is not to put you



on guard against the demands of your father, if you should come of age before you are married, and therefore have a right to dispose of your fortune.

"Monsieur De Brives will keep the promise he has made to me, that he will never touch what belongs to you. I have his word for it. Ah, if I had been able to extort from him also an oath that he would never gamble, how sure I should have been of him! But my prayers and supplications have always been in vain in this direction.

"'No,' he would say to me, 'I will not take that oath, for it would be too cruel for me to keep it.'

"If I tell you all these things and write you this long letter, it is with one single end in view, my child, and that is, to put you on guard against a bad or unsuitable marriage, and to prevent, especially, a marriage with a gambler. I have suffered so much, as you have already seen.

"To love a man to adoration; to have given him the whole soul, and then have to say to yourself that he gives you in requital but a part of himself; to have a rival, a thousand times preferred, that cannot be got rid of and against whom one cannot contend, and to whom one is constantly sacrificed without a hope of anything in return; to say to yourself, even when he is near to you, sitting by your side, that your husband does not belong to you, that his thoughts are elsewhere, that he is thinking how he can find some new method of propitiating fortune or conjuring fate!

"To be waiting for him through the entire night; to see him return at six, seven, and ten o'clock in the morning, pale, disfigured, and broken down, to rest only till evening, and in the evening continue the game only interrupted by the morning!

"Not to be able to accept an invitation to a fashionable party; for, being with his *club*, he will not come for you perhaps at the proper hour, and you don't

wish to have the appearance of being a poor, neglected woman. Not to be able to rejoice at his cheerfulness, as you know that gain at cards is the cause of it, nor share his sadness, which can inspire no interest, as it can be attributed only to some loss. These two words, *gain*, *loss*, have alone the privilege of affecting him. In them his whole life is summed up.

"All this without reckoning the constant pain of seeing disappear little by little a fine fortune, which one would have been so happy to bequeath to his children, and which, wisely managed, would certainly have been increased.

"Such, my darling child, have been my sorrows, which have been cruel, I assure you, perhaps mortal; and I wish to preserve you from them.

"Listen well to what I am going to say to you, for death, which is not far off, gives me a sort of prescience or intuition of the dangers which may threaten you.

"The time will come when your father will take you from the convent. He will endeavor to procure for you the greatest possible diversions, but he will not be able to offer you the only ones which would be suitable for you. For a long time he has broken with all his connections. The life which he leads does not allow him a moment of respite. He has been obliged to give up visits, receptions, dinners accepted and reciprocated, and soirées, which alone, among fashionable people, give rise to and keep up good social and visiting acquaintance. He sees only his club friends, and is connected particularly only with persons who share his tastes, and whom he finds every evening at the same gambling-table. These are the persons whom you will meet at his house, and to whom he will introduce you. It is one of them who, charmed by your youth and accomplishments, or only desirous of repairing with your dowry the breaches made in his own fortune by gambling, will ask for your hand in marriage.



"Your father will not have the courage to refuse. Perhaps it will not be in his power to do so. Oh, my God! my maternal solicitude authorizes me to foresee everything. Perhaps he will be indebted to this friend to a considerable amount, or has contracted towards him one of those debts called debts of honor, which place one man at the mercy of another. I do not think your father will ever entertain the thought of making a speculation out of your marriage, or of uniting you with a person unworthy of you; but he will be disposed to deceive himself in regard to this person, to be blind to his faults, and to exaggerate his merits. He will hesitate above all, through self-love, to confess to himself that a gambler is not worthy to become a husband and a father.

"It is therefore for you, my dear child, to put yourself on guard against every surprise, to show yourself firm and strong when the question is about confiding your entire destiny to one man. It is for you, I say, finally, to take upon yourself the task, for your own sake, which I should have been so happy to fulfill.

"Ah, if it should then be permitted me to come to your aid, how well I should know how to guide your choice! I would say to you, do not become attached to external appearances. Seek not a brilliant exterior, title, or splendid establishment.

"The man who will please you, if you will believe me, should be from thirty to thirty-five years of age. Under thirty, one is still quite young; and above that, it is necessary to be cautious. It is true, there is not a great disproportion between a young woman of twenty and a man of forty. But ten years, fifteen years, later, this difference is frightful; for the woman is still in the vigor of age and splendor of beauty, but the man is on the verge of old age.

"The husband I would choose for you should be neither handsome nor ugly. He should be plain and simple in his dress and manners, with a fortune which would

secure to him independence, nothing more, and enable him to do a little good around him. This good he should do personally and judiciously, without ever consulting others about it. Charity should as rarely as possible be administered by proxy. He must be fond of home-life and the domestic fireside. He must cultivate the arts; for nothing will protect a man against the dissipations and vices of the world like music and painting.

"Finally, I should wish that your husband should be well educated, thoughtful, serious, and perhaps even of a nature somewhat sad. Sadness, when not exaggerated, is not displeasing in a man; for it indicates that he has suffered and is acquainted with life.

"Such is an outline portrait of the husband that I would have selected for you, and whom you, I hope, will choose in my place, my dear child, in remembrance of me.

"I have yet many things to say to you, but this letter, already long, has exhausted the little strength that remained to me. The physician has surprised me with pen in hand, scolded, and ordered me to take my bed. I know what that means; it is probable I shall never leave it alive. Your father has not left me for eight days. He is perfect towards me. One might say that he wishes to make me forget the many sorrows he has inflicted upon me. Oh, had it not been for the fatal passion that rules him, how happy he might have made me! Love him, my dear child, with all your heart. Be indulgent to his faults, show him your affection by all the means in your power; but do not yield to him the choice of your husband. This is not only a prayer that I address to you, it is an express *will*, my *last will*, which I make known unto you.

"Farewell, my beloved daughter; I impress on this paper long kisses for you. If this letter ever falls into your hands, you will apply your lips, in your turn, to the place where I am writing these last



lines. Perhaps it will still be impregnated with my breath. Perhaps time will respect the trace of my kisses."

## XI.

AFTER meditating on this letter, weeping on re-perusal, and pressing it to my lips for a long time, I went to my father's room.

"Well," said he, on seeing me, "do you bring me an answer? I did not expect it to-day."

"And I did not think I could give it."

"In what a tone you say that, and with what a face! What is the matter with you, my dear child? Has any one hurt your feelings? Am I guilty of some indiscretion?"

"No, dear father, you have never been otherwise than kind and good to me, and that is the reason you see me so sad at this moment."

"I don't understand you."

"In exchange for your cares and attention I have come to displease you. You have selected for me a husband, you advise me to marry him, and—I refuse him."

"Ah, you refuse him!"

"Yes, father."

"Have you reflected before coming to this decision?"

"A great deal."

"And yet you will confess that Monsieur De Mézin pleases you in many respects."

"I do; but in many others he does not."

"What have you against him? His age, forty-two?"

"I might object to that, if more serious reasons did not guide my refusal."

"May I know them?"

"You would oblige me by not asking for them."

"I am very desirous of obliging you,

but you will confess that I have a right to be a little exigent in this case; for the count is my friend, and I should be glad to know what can be said against him."

"Do you insist upon my telling you?"

"I beg of you to do so."

"I have every reason to think that Monsieur De Mézin is a gambler."

My father bit his lips, and said,—

"What can make you think so?"

"Many things; but in case I am mistaken, it is easy for you to set me right. Can you affirm that Monsieur De Mézin never gambles?"

"No, I cannot affirm that. He plays for amusement, as everybody does."

"And a little more than everybody, does he not? In a word, he spends his nights in the club-room, and often risks considerable sums at cards."

"But——"

"I appeal to your honor, father. Tell me that Monsieur De Mézin is not a gambler, and I will marry him."

My father made no reply. I then took his hand, and said affectionately,—

"You will not talk to me any more of this marriage, will you, dear father?"

"Be it so; I will not. But I am displeased with Miss Dowson. She has prejudiced you against Monsieur De Mézin."

"I declare to you that she has not. Miss Dowson has not spoken to me of your friend."

"Then she has preached against gambling and gamblers."

"She would not, perhaps, have been much out of her way," said I, with an attempt to smile. "But Miss Dowson does not preach. In order to preach, one must open the mouth, and you know that hers is padlocked."

"Whence comes this antipathy to gamblers?"

"From instinct, dear father."

"You are wrong. They have some good in them."

"To whom do you say this?" said I, leaping into his arms.

He understood the meaning of this



hasty movement, and said, with a sad smile,—

"You know, then——"

"I know that I love you, that's all."

He took me in his arms, looked at me as if he was trying to recall other features, when a tear glistened in his eyes, and he applied his lips for a long time to my forehead.

Oh, my father *is* good! A moment after I said to him,—

"Will you allow your daughter to interest herself in your affairs?"

"But——"

"Who should feel an interest in them, if not I? Am I not the one you love the most in the world?"

"Certainly."

"Am I not a grown-up, reasonable young woman?"

"I confess it, more reasonable than is usual for one of your age."

"Very well. You ought to comply with my wishes."

"Say on."

"Do you, in the first place, promise to tell the whole truth?"

"I will try to."

"We shall see. Answer this first question: Have you not some pecuniary embarrassments?"

"What are you driving at?"

"Please answer; we shall see afterwards."

"Why?"

"Oh, *do* answer!"

"Well—yes, I am, at present, I acknowledge, not without some perplexities and trouble."

"Well, you must get rid of them."

"Oh," said my father, smiling, "I could ask for nothing better. But the *means* of doing it; if you can devise them, you must be very expert."

"Then I *am* very expert, for I have found them."

"Indeed! That is interesting. Will you allow me to light a cigarette?"

"All the cigarettes on earth."

"Well, now for the means."

"They are the simplest in the world: I have a dowry, dispose of it."

"Truly? That is what you have found, then, and I was seriously listening to you."

"I am *not* serious, then?"

"Very serious and adorable. But you know nothing about business. And suppose that I were—how shall I express it?—suppose I were unscrupulous enough to accept your proposition, I should be none the better off for it. Learn then, my simple child, that minors cannot dispose of their fortune."

"Ah! And I shall not be of age till I am twenty-one?"

"Exactly so."

"Alas!" said I, with a sigh. "And I have still more than two years to wait!"

"Unless you get married; marriage emancipates."

"Indeed! If I should marry, could I dispose of a part of my dowry?"

"With the consent of your husband."

"Oh, he would give it to me; for I would make that a condition. To how much does my dowry amount?"

"It may amount to about four hundred thousand francs."

"Why, I should then be too rich for my tastes. Dear father, we will divide, won't we? Say yes."

"Never."

"I will oblige you to accept."

"In the first place, it would be necessary for you to get married," said he, laughing; "and you don't seem to me very accommodating. Poor Count De Mézin might bear witness to that, in case of necessity."

"Oh," replied I, "Monsieur De Mézin is not the only man on earth."

Our conversation ended in this way. I went then to Miss Dowson, read to her my mother's letter, and we wept over it a long time together.



## XII.

MAY.

Two days elapsed, two days during which I did not, for a moment, cease to think upon my mother's letter. I have weighed every word of it, I have meditated and commented upon it. I desire to obey not only the wishes which are *expressed* in this letter, in a manner so clear and precise, but even the least desires which I can imagine she *might* have expressed.

As to what concerns marriage, my decision has been made. I will neither marry Monsieur De Mézin nor any one of my father's friends. But I wish to be married; yes, I dare write these words; I wish to marry, because by marrying I fulfill a duty; I obey also the last wishes of my mother, who said to me, "Love him with your whole heart, be indulgent to his faults, show him your affection by every means in your power."

What better way of showing this affection than by trying to free him as soon as possible from the cares that torment him?

Ah, my mother's letter has opened to me unknown horizons! How many things are now explained for me!

When my father left me in the evening in so much haste, it was to go to the club to continue the game of cards begun the day before.

If I did not see him the next day till towards two o'clock in the afternoon, it was because the game had been continued until morning, and that he went to bed at the hour when every one usually gets up.

That loan he got of me one day I can explain now. It was to pay, in a short time, a debt contracted by gambling.

And that sudden departure for Hombourg! He was going probably to try to be more lucky in that city than he was in Paris.

That impatience, sadness, and long silence,—I can divine the cause of the whole of it. He kept losing, always los-

ing. And that marriage! Alas! he was probably constrained to speak to me about it. He is probably the debtor of Monsieur De Mézin. Yes, I now remember certain words which cannot leave me in any doubt on the subject. Monsieur De Mézin took advantage of his position as a fortunate player, and my father—But he simply proposed to me this marriage; he had not the courage to advise it. As soon as I refused him he did not insist, and immediately sacrificed his interests, very grave interests perhaps, to my happiness.

And should I not endeavor to come to his aid? I am rich and he is poor. What matters it how he became so? "Has that anything to do with him who bestows a favor?" said Monsieur Gérard the other day. I am living tranquilly without cares of any sort, and my father, who is here with me under the same roof, suffers and is tormented. Yes, I wish, and I *ought*, to marry. The half of my property shall be consecrated to the payment of my father's debts, and to the securing of his comfort and well-being. If my husband does not join in my project, it will be because he has no heart, and then I will not make a husband of him.

I am astonished! I speak of husbands absolutely, as if I had only to stoop to conquer one.

Where are they? Let us see. Am I acquainted with any? No. Who are the young men my father has introduced to me? Who are they that I have accidentally met with? It is in vain to look for them. I see no one,—absolutely no one—

Ah, what a—*what* a fib!

If I have not the courage to say in this journal what I think,—if I cannot be frank with myself,—I might as well tear up these pages and never more open this album.

MAY 12.

No, I am not mistaken. It is perfectly clear. I must confess that the portrait drawn by my mother of the person she



would wish me to marry applies exactly to——

Ah, yes! Why should I not write it, since I have been saying it to myself incessantly for eight days?

This portrait is that of Monsieur George Gérard. "He must be," said my mother, "simple in his dress and manners. He must have a fortune which will secure him independence, nothing more, and which will allow him to do a little good around him. This good he must do himself. He must be fond of family life and the domestic fireside. He must cultivate the arts. Finally, I would like that he should be educated, thoughtful, serious, and, perhaps, even a little melancholy by nature."

One would think indeed that, by a sort of intuition or divination, my mother was drawing the character of the first person with whom I should come in contact on leaving the convent.

She is in heaven now, and is constantly watching over me. Is it not for me to divine her wishes and to understand her?

Happiness is perhaps here, close by, in my own house. My mother points to it. "Behold," says she, "the man who will be suitable for you, to whom I would have confided your destiny with pleasure. He is the husband of my choice, and I wish that you, in your turn, will choose him among all others."

But if I am mistaken,—if, while thinking I am obeying my mother, I am obeying only—— Ah! I don't know what to think. Is it my mother who is speaking? Is it simply my heart? Or have we now—she and I—no longer but one and the same soul?

\* \* \* \* \*

I am trying to amuse myself. I oblige Miss Dowson to take a walk with me. I talk, and talk, so much that I succeed sometimes in untying the tongue of my dear companion. I am reading some interesting books which she has been to buy for me, for she is very well educated,

this Miss Dowson. She is a reservoir of information, to which one may have recourse without ever being disappointed. But she resembles a dictionary, which says nothing unless consulted, and everything if you open it.

Yesterday my father wished to devote an evening to me, and took me to the theatre. But, in spite of all amusements, I have one fixed idea. My thoughts run constantly upon the will expressed by my mother and the portrait sketched by her.

Ah, how one suffers from a fixed idea! One no longer belongs to himself, and can no longer direct the thought to a single end. It is incessantly ruled by another thought, which does not come from you, which you have not invoked, which intrudes itself in spite of you, and absorbs your whole being.

Perhaps it is the physical influencing the moral. I have felt quite unwell for a few days. I have at times a palpitation of the heart, so violent that it seems to me I must suffocate. Of what disease did my mother die? It has never been exactly defined to me.

MAY 20.

I no longer dare to return to Madame Gérard's. Why is that? Why should I not do to-day what I did so easily yesterday, and with so much pleasure six weeks ago?

It seems to me that I should be ashamed, that I should blush and feel confused. And yet I should like to see her.

I should like, also, to be awhile with Monsieur Gérard, in order to take a new look at him. It may be that I have been mistaken, and that he does not at all resemble the portrait drawn by my mother.

Ah! I should like to be satisfied about it. Then I should be more tranquil. I should no longer think I hear my mother say, "I have marked out a line of conduct for you, and you do not follow it."

And how am I to follow it?



Is it for *me* to make a visit to Monsieur Gérard? Formerly, I used to call on his mother. *Now*, in my present state of mind, it would be himself that I should go to see. I ought not to do it.

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### XIII.

MAY 24.

WE have met. I was going out with Miss Dowson, he was returning with his mother. He approached and saluted me, and his mother affectionately gave me her hand.

"I find you are a little changed," said she. "Have you been ill?"

"No, madame," I replied.

I told a falsehood, for the palpitations of my heart are stronger than ever; but, I know not why, I was not willing to acknowledge in his presence that I was ill.

We exchanged some words and separated. She did not reproach me with no longer calling on her. While talking with Madame Gérard, I perceived that he was looking at me attentively. It seemed to me, when we separated, that he turned around to look. He is about the age my mother speaks of in her letter,—from thirty to thirty-five.

MAY 25.

I have passed a very bad night, and had the imprudence to tell it to my father, who immediately sent for his physician and friend, Paul Combes, in the second story.

The doctor felt my pulse, ausculted my heart for a long time, asked several questions, and said,—

"No occasion for alarm. You need diversion and amusement." We then spoke of various matters, and finally of music.

"By the way, do you know that we have an excellent musician in the house?" said Dr. Combes.

"Who, pray?" asked my father.

"Your tenant at the end of the court. When my office windows are open I can hear him perfectly well, and he affords me a great deal of pleasure. Without being very distinguished on the piano, and without appearing to have studied very much, he plays with a soul. Have you never heard him, mademoiselle?"

"Yes, sir, as you have, from my window."

Did I blush when I said that? It seemed to me that the doctor looked at me with astonishment. These physicians are very disagreeable. Instead of limiting themselves to feeling your pulse, they look you all over.

"What!" exclaimed my father, "have I musicians in my house, and I am not aware of it? It will be necessary," said he, smiling, "to increase the rent of my tenants; it is proper that they should pay something additional for the pleasure they enjoy. My dear doctor, please consider yourself notified."

"My dear landlord," replied Monsieur Combes, "if you are going to raise my rent on account of music, I will go to Monsieur Gérard and request him to close his piano."

"Are you particularly acquainted with him? I have never had any but business relations with Madame Gérard, when she was installed in my house."

"I have had occasion to see him several times," replied the doctor, "and he had the appearance of being a charming man, intelligent, educated, natural, and good. His manners are a little reserved. He abuses, perhaps, the right one has of not committing himself to strangers, and even to his physician; but from beneath his cold exterior, whatever he does, peep out a beautiful soul and a lofty character."

"*Diable, diable!*" said my father, "what a eulogy! Do you know that is valuable, doctor, coming from you, who stand so high in public esteem?"

It is a fact, and Miss Dowson has often told me so, that Monsieur Paul Combes enjoys a high reputation among his breth-



ren of the profession, and that he owes it as much to his honorable character as to his talent. I love him much. My father continued :

"How old, pray, can your patient be, in order to have a character so well formed and fixed as to deserve your admiration? I thought Monsieur Gérard very young."

"He is not more than thirty-two, or thirty-five. But his life must have been one of agitation, and even of torment. He has been drilled, I am sure of it, in the best of schools, that of misfortune."

"You know nothing in particular about his life?"

"I know what he has told me and what I could guess at. After living a long time in America, he was, on his return to France, visited by a terrible, unforeseen event, the nature of which I do not know, but which has had certainly upon his character and his whole life, down to the present time, a very great influence."

How right my father was in saying, a short time ago, that nothing escapes our doctor's notice! All the observations which I made, in regard to Monsieur Gérard, he has made also, and has drawn from them nearly the same conclusions. They have enabled him to pass this judgment.

The conversation ended here. But it seemed to me that Monsieur Combes, during this conversation, had continually his eyes fixed upon me.

Did he wish to read also my life and heart?

Perhaps he was looking at me only as a physician, and was more uneasy about my condition than he was willing to appear.

What led me to think so was, that after leaving the parlor, and instead of going up to his own room, he followed my father into his office.

\* \* \* \* \*

MAY 30.

I am suffering more than ever. The palpitations of my heart increase when I

sit down to write. If I should be obliged to give up the pleasure I feel in confiding all my thoughts to this album——

Ah, do I record them all? Yesterday I made a visit to the end of the court, and I have not related it. It is true that I was so fatigued on returning——

JUNE 5.

My father wishes by all means to provide for me diversions and amusements. He proposed to me this morning to set out on a journey. I refused. It seems to me that motion is not good for me. I wish to stay in this house, which reminds me of my mother. I wish——

Ah, how I suffer! I can write no more.

\* \* \* \* \*

The journal of Mademoiselle Marcelle de Brives ending here, we shall complete it by the aid of the notes which have been communicated to us, and of the recitals that have been kindly offered.

#### XIV.

ON the 22d of June of the same year, Monsieur De Brives, whose mind was very much exercised by the suffering condition of his daughter, went up, about ten o'clock in the morning, to Dr. Combes's room.

"Doctor," said he, "you saw Marcelle again yesterday, but eluded the questions I asked you on leaving her room. I appreciate your discretion, and thank you. But it is no longer the father of a family, whose grief you think it a duty to spare, that addresses you at this time. It is the friend, the client, who comes to talk with you in a serious manner and to ask you what you think of your patient."

Dr. Combes thought for a moment, and replied,—

"If you put the question in these terms, I think I ought to tell you the truth. The malady which I thought I recognized in



your daughter, the day on which you called me to her for the first time, has made, during the week, surprising, but not alarming, progress. I am seeking with great interest for the causes which may have determined divers symptoms which I notice in her case, in order not to be obliged to confess that I was mistaken in denying, until now, the transmission of certain germs, the inheritance of certain diseases."

"How?" said Monsieur De Brives. "Do you think——"

"I simply think that Madame De Brives died of hypertrophy of the heart, and that palpitation and spitting of blood, although they do not absolutely indicate hypertrophy, are sometimes the symptoms of it."

"Good God! can that be so?" said Monsieur De Brives.

"It is nothing which should seriously alarm you," continued the doctor. "The disease of which I speak, supposing Mademoiselle Marcelle is affected by it, and I by no means affirm it, may be easily combated. People live ten, twenty, thirty years with hypertrophy of a severe type; great sorrows and violent emotions usually determine accidents, as hæmoptysis and rupture of the heart."

"Why, then, my daughter is saved! What sorrows do you suppose she can have, and what emotions could affect her? I will devote myself to the rendering of her life easy and sweet."

The doctor looked steadily at Monsieur De Brives, and said,—

"You have done so up to this time?"

"Without any doubt."

"Are you sure of it?"

"Why, doctor, these questions wound me. What makes you suppose that my daughter is not happy with me?"

"I suppose nothing. I am seeking for enlightenment. That is my right and my duty. I should not certainly deserve the reputation people are kind enough to give me, if, in the presence of a patient, I limited myself to pulse-feeling, and auscultation. In certain cases I try to

study the patient as much in a moral as in a physical point of view; and if I enjoy any pre-eminence, it is only in that. I have listened attentively to your daughter's heart, but I have especially endeavored to *read* it. And now I can assure you that she is suffering from an unknown disease, and that her pain is the more keen as she tries to hide it from every eye."

"It is impossible, doctor; I have never inflicted upon her a sorrow or a pain. Some weeks ago, one of my friends asked me for her hand. This marriage would have pleased me in some respects. I spoke to Marcelle about it; it did not please her, and I did not urge it."

"What motive did she assign for refusing it?"

"None very serious."

"She must have had one, at least."

"What one?"

"Some young girlish love."

"No. Marcelle's life is passed between her governess and me. She makes no visits, and the only friend I have introduced to her was he whom she has refused."

"And your tenant at the end of the court, that Monsieur Gérard of whom I spoke purposely the other day in the presence of Mademoiselle Marcelle?"

"She hears him, and sees him, but does not know him."

"Has she not called several times on his mother?"

"I am thinking about that. She asked of me permission once to visit that lady, in order to interest her in her poor, and I consented. But I was not aware that an intimacy had been established between her and Madame Gérard."

"Ah, you ought to know it, my friend! Permit me to tell you, when one is the father of a grown-up young girl——"

"When this young girl has constantly with her a respectable, devoted woman,—a second mother,—the duties and responsibilities of the father are much diminished."



"Be it so. I acquit you. It matters but little now. But as a physician, called to combat a disease of the heart, I feel it my duty to say that your daughter is in love with Monsieur Gérard."

"That is not evident to me. I admit some visits to Madame Gérard, some meetings with her son, but that is not sufficient to——"

"Allow me to proceed. Consider the isolation of your daughter; the real merit of Monsieur Gérard that I have spoken of; his somewhat mysterious life, which does not resemble ours, and which may have struck the imagination of a young girl. Consider that, if Mademoiselle Marcelle, as I hope, has not inherited disease from her mother, she takes from her, nevertheless, certain germs of a tendency to sentimentality, to extravagant enthusiasm, and to every sort of exaggeration of which the mind is capable. Finally, my dear friend, who can say that the heart of your daughter is not invincibly drawn towards Monsieur Gérard by powerful motives which we are not acquainted with and cannot divine? Ah! we must foresee everything. We must, in a case so important as this, meet all possible suppositions. I have thought it my duty to talk to you with entire frankness, as a physician and friend."

## XV.

AFTER this conversation, Monsieur De Brives went to Miss Dowson and endeavored to get some information from her. It was to undertake a difficult task. Miss Dowson would have made an excellent tragedy confidante. She had an admirable talent for listening to the longest tirades, and one might take his own time to tell her all he knew or wished to know and do. But when he stopped and gave her a chance to speak, she would encourage him by a gesture or look to proceed,

but obstinately persisted in making no reply. Monsieur De Brives succeeded only in extorting from her a few monosyllables relative to the visits of Marcelle to Madame Gérard; but they were sufficient to enable him to understand that the doctor's suppositions were based upon a very exact point of departure.

Monsieur De Brives wished then to have a conversation with his daughter. He rejoined her in her room, sat beside her, took her hands, and with a charming, almost feminine, grace, with infinite delicacy, which some men can never lose, whatever may be their surroundings, he tried to obtain from her a confidence that might enlighten him.

But Mademoiselle De Brives kept her secret. She dared not confess to herself that she loved George Gérard. How could she confess it to her father?

However, as the few monosyllables extorted from Miss Dowson had enlightened Monsieur De Brives on several points, so, certain blushes, certain excited phrases, which escaped from the patient, confirmed all the doctor's sagacity. But might there not be some exaggeration? Was Marcelle suffering from that love, unacknowledged and suppressed, to such a degree as to be prejudicial to her health?

Miss Dowson knew nothing about it, or would say nothing about it. Marcelle could not be directly interrogated on the subject; and besides, *could* she answer? One single person remained to be consulted to any advantage, and that was Madame Gérard.

The situation was too grave for Monsieur De Brives to hesitate what to do. He must call on her. Did he not owe her a visit in order to thank her for her kindness to his daughter? and, as a landlord, could he not find motives for soliciting this interview?

He was received very kindly by his tenant, and their long conversation, full of reticences and *understoods*, in which the greatest reserve was manifested on both sides, may be epitomized thus:



Marcelle had been to see Madame Gérard on several occasions, and the latter, who found her very agreeable, had every time shown her great attention, without ever asking her to come again, and without returning any of her visits. As to George Gérard, he shared the opinion of his mother in respect to Mademoiselle De Brives, but had never shown it either by word or look.

"What is to be done?" said Monsieur De Brives to the doctor, on seeing him again after these different conversations which he had faithfully reported to him.

"Nothing at present," replied the doctor: "wait. But I repeat it, your daughter is suffering the more because she is unwilling to confide her suffering to any one, and dares not even to do so to herself. It will be necessary, sooner or later, at all hazards, to obtain her confidence."

"By what means, doctor?"

"I will find them."

Some days elapsed, and the evil increased.

One morning the doctor said to Monsieur De Brives,—

"I have found the means we were looking for; but it is painful to use them. A mother, doubtless, would have no scruples in this regard; a father may and ought to have. Were you aware that your daughter wrote down day by day her impressions?"

"No."

"Well, on entering her room this morning with Miss Dowson, I noticed a sort of album on a piece of furniture. It was open at the first page, and I read on it these words: 'My life since I left the convent.' The confidence, or secrets which are refused you, and which are indispensable to you, will be found in that album or journal."

"And you wish—— If the question were about your *own* daughter, what would you do?"

"I would read it."

"That is sufficient."

During the day Monsieur De Brives induced Marcelle to take a ride with Miss Dowson. He profited by this absence; entered his daughter's room, opened the little secretary which he had given her, and went rapidly through the journal which we have published.

After this reading, doubt was no longer possible. The love of Mademoiselle De Brives for George Gérard shone out on every page, although she nowhere openly avowed it. This love was so much the more serious, as it was founded in some measure upon a superstition. Marcelle, excited by illness, firmly believed she was obeying the last wishes of her mother. She imagined she was fulfilling a duty by abandoning herself to the aspirations of her heart. She loved the more ardently, as she found in her passion a sort of satisfaction to her filial piety. But she had at the same time a consciousness of the too great suddenness of this love. All the bashfulness and modesty of a young girl were awakened at the idea that people might criticise her and accuse her of fickleness or imprudence. Unwilling to avow to any one what feelings and thoughts she obeyed, and without the power to define them, she remained silent and suffered in silence, without strength to speak or power to act.

Monsieur De Brives, after replacing the album where he had found it, shut himself up in his office and reflected for a long time.

The letter of Madame De Brives had made upon him a lively impression. The troubles he had brought upon her had shortened her life. If he had known how to procure for her a calm and quiet life, she would not have succumbed to the malady by which she was attacked. Did not Doctor Combes say that people might live ten, twenty, thirty years with hypertrophy of the heart? And Marcelle was suffering perhaps with the same disease. Marcelle might be taken away from him, as her mother had been, by a succession of moral sufferings. No, he would save her



at any cost! He would save her in spite of herself! If she refused to acknowledge her love, he would do it for her. She dared no more to go to George Gérard's house, and was dying because she saw him no more. He would take her to his house, if necessary. Above all, he wanted her to live. Ah, at this moment he was no longer a gambler, he had become a father again!

Soon his course was decided upon. He wrote a word to Monsieur Gérard, requesting an interview. His tenant replied that he was at home, and awaited his pleasure.

Monsieur De Brives took his hat and crossed the court. He was going frankly, like an honest man, to talk with another honest man. Had not his mind been for a long time made up in regard to George Gérard? Had not Doctor Combes, an expert in such matters, become responsible for his honorable character? And did not the discreet behavior of this young man towards Marcelle confirm, to a demonstration, his perfect uprightness?

George Gérard listened to Monsieur De Brives in silence, and in a sort of abstraction, or mental absence; then in his turn began, and said,—

“If I have understood you, sir, you ask me to use my influence with my mother to induce her to go and spend a few moments with Mademoiselle De Brives; and you wish that I should return your visit to me as soon as possible; finally, you desire to see us, myself and mother, depart from our usual reserve. Well, sir, we cannot do it. All you have been kind enough to say to me honors me infinitely, and touches me to the bottom of my heart; but your frankness calls for mine in return. I cannot call at your house, just because of the motive which I think I understand, and which makes you desire to see me. My visits would strengthen certain ideas, which all your efforts should tend, on the contrary, to banish and combat, when I shall have told you these simple words: my place is not at the

house of a young marriageable woman, for I shall never marry.”

The surprise of Monsieur De Brives on hearing George Gérard express himself in this way was extreme. What had embarrassed him in the step he had just taken was the step itself. It was one of the most delicate, and required great tact. But the idea had not occurred to him for a single moment to say to himself that he might not succeed, that he would encounter an invincible obstacle; that he should find a man foolish enough to refuse the love of a young girl of nineteen, rich, well educated, extremely beautiful, and charming in all respects. This man existed, nevertheless. And Monsieur De Brives, whose persistence, delicate as it was in such a case, was authorized and legitimated in a certain degree by the gravity of the circumstances and the object which he had proposed to himself to attain, was not able to triumph over the resistance opposed to him.

He was obliged even to give up all new attempts, for George Gérard set out on a journey the very night which followed his conversation with Monsieur De Brives. One might have said that he wished to put a greater distance between himself and Marcelle.

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## XVI.

IN the month of July the condition of Marcelle gave serious alarm to Doctor Combes, and he thought it his duty to speak with her father about it.

For some time nothing could induce her to leave her room. She would remain whole days with her eyes fixed, with her hands resting on her heart to repress palpitation, and mouth open to breathe more freely. Like Miss Dowson, she replied only in monosyllables to the questions addressed to her, and seemed to ask it as



a favor that they would not disturb her solitude and divert her from her thoughts.

"If we do not succeed in withdrawing her from the prostration in which she now is," said the doctor, "I can no longer be responsible for her."

"And what can be done?" asked Monsieur De Brives, in an excited tone of voice.

"Has Monsieur Gérard returned from his journey?"

"No; and besides, what if he has? Have I not repeated to you his words? What hope can we rest on him?"

"He alone, however, can save her," said the doctor. After a little reflection, he added, "Will you authorize me to make one last effort with his mother, and tell her what I think will be beneficial to our cause?"

"Proceed as you may think proper, doctor. All social proprieties must give way before the calamity which threatens us."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Madame," said the doctor to Madame Gérard, after some preliminary phrases, "I am perfectly of the opinion that marriage is too serious a thing for one to think of it with the view of obliging some one. It would be a very unwelcome undertaking on my part, to speak to you of the condition of my patient and attempt to interest you and your son in it. You have your reasons for repelling the advances which, in spite of all received usages, we have thought it a duty to make, and we respect those reasons, without even seeking to know what they are. So I do not come to speak to you about marriage: our hopes do not extend so far; and, besides, it is none of my business. I am here simply in the capacity of a physician, madame, and say to you, I believe that Mademoiselle De Brives would have great pleasure in seeing you and your son, and that this visit would afford a happy diversion to the state of prostration in which she now is, and a good influence upon her health. The matter being thus stated, all your scruples ought to disappear. It

is not on a young marriageable girl that you will call, but a patient, at the request of her physician."

"It would be very uncivil in me to refuse what you ask, doctor," said Madame Gérard, with great emotion. "I will call on Mademoiselle De Brives. To-morrow my son, to whom I shall send a dispatch, will have returned to Paris, and will accompany me." And when the doctor thanked her, she said, with tears in her eyes,—

"Tell Monsieur De Brives the interest we feel in his troubles. Tell him we would have given everything in the world to have prevented them. But that did not depend upon us; *we* do not belong to ourselves; we are undergoing——"

She suddenly stopped, frightened as if she had said too much, and accompanied the doctor to the door.

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## XVII.

THE same evening, Monsieur De Brives said to his daughter, with an affected tone of indifference,—

"Do you know that I am going to be under an obligation not to increase the rent of my tenants?"

"Why?" asked she.

"They have been giving me on all sides, since you have been ill, such evidence of sympathy, that I must in some way give proof of my gratitude."

"Do they think of me? You astonish me," said she, with some bitterness.

"In the first place, you will not complain of Dr. Combes, I suppose."

"Oh, that man! he is not a tenant, he is a friend."

"And the gentleman who lives in the third story, he is a real tenant. For five years we have known nothing of him, except when his rent is due. But now, every morning, he asks the porter how



you have passed the night." She said nothing, and he continued,—

"I am very highly pleased also with the persons who live in the building separated from ours. You remember the little isolated pavilion at the end of the court?"

"Yes," replied she, and her eyes brightened.

"It is occupied," said her father, "by a lady who lives with her son. Well, not a day passes but she comes to inquire after your health."

"Why is she not admitted?" asked she, rising up.

"Doctor Combes had forbidden it. But to-day, finding your condition more satisfactory, he has countermanded the order."

"It would be well, then, to send word to Madame Gérard that I am at home for her."

"It is useless. She will call again to-morrow at her usual hour."

"At what o'clock?"

"About two. And she solicits one favor, which I don't feel exactly inclined to grant."

"What favor?"

"It appears that her son has just made a long journey abroad, in Germany, I believe; and that in that country, where charity is understood in an intelligent manner, he has collected different notes which may be useful to you in the project you formerly spoke to me about. He would like to submit them to you. Perhaps you are a little too feeble to listen to him. What do you think about it?"

"The moment the subject of the poor comes up," said she, with an air of resignation, "I ought to make an effort."

"Then you will receive Monsieur Gérard with his mother?"

"If you are willing."

"Oh, I have not had any will for a long time. I obey the *faculty*, and agree to whatever Doctor Combes recommends."

## XVIII.

THE next morning the doctor was enabled to verify a sensible improvement in the condition of his patient. The palpitations were as frequent as on preceding days, and even more so, but all prostration had disappeared. Mademoiselle De Brives answered the questions put to her; and at times asked some. Twice during the doctor's visit she looked in the mirror and murmured out, "Heavens, how I have changed!"

At two o'clock in the afternoon Madame Gérard and son were announced. Miss Dowson and Monsieur De Brives were in Marcelle's room. During this visit, which lasted more than an hour, the patient talked about everything with an animation a little feverish, but by far preferable to her habitual dejection. She seemed to be taking a new hold of life, and new horizons opened before her. Discouragement had vanished as by enchantment, and hope returned.

She said to the doctor, who came to see her in the evening,—

"Doctor, give me your remedies and I will take them all. I am tired of suffering and wish to be well."

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Madame Gérard and son did not limit themselves to this visit. At the request of the doctor they renewed it frequently.

"Give me time to subdue the disease," said he to them. "Let her health be entirely restored. I ask of you six weeks at most. Then your visits may be less and less frequent, and you shall resume your entire liberty."

Madame Gérard and son complied very nobly with the doctor's request. Instead of granting the six weeks he requested, they gave him two months, then three.

Mademoiselle De Brives was now perfectly well. Her palpitations had disappeared, and her color had returned. She walked out every day with her father, lived like everybody else, and, strange to say, the visits continued. They did not



seem inclined to profit by the liberty the doctor had given them.

What was passing in the minds of Madame Gérard and son? Had they entirely departed from their reserve? Had their ideas been modified? Had that resolution never to marry, which George Gérard had so distinctly manifested, vanished?

We will reply to these questions by relating here a conversation which took place, about the period we have now reached, in the office of Monsieur X——, an ancient chief of the order of advocates of the Imperial Court of Rouen, and for the last two years living in retirement in Paris, St. Anne Street.

## XIX.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, when his servant came to inform him that a lady wished to speak with him. She refused to give her name, but said she was very well known to him.

"Did you tell her," asked Monsieur X——, "that I no longer gave any consultations?"

"Yes; but this lady does not call as a client: she formerly knew you at Rouen, and desires to see you."

"Show her in."

Monsieur X—— went to meet the visitor, and offered her a chair; and as he seemed to be trying in vain to recollect her features, she said, "You will not recognize me, sir; nobody does. In eight years I have grown thirty years older. I am now an old woman, and my hair is quite white."

"You have preserved, madame," said the old lawyer, gallantly, "a smile which formerly attracted my notice, and which I cannot forget. If I do not remember exactly who you are, you must excuse me; I have seen so many people in my long career. But I remember perfectly

that I *have* known you, and on a serious occasion, if I am not mistaken."

"Very serious indeed, sir; I came to ask you to defend, before the assizes of the Seine-Inférieure, my son, my only child, accused of attempted assassination and robbery."

He rose quickly, took her hand, and said, with emotion,—

"You are Madame Du Hamel!"

"For you, I am," said she. "To another I should deny having been ever so called."

After contemplating for a moment the much-changed features of Madame Du Hamel, the old advocate exclaimed, warmly,—

"Ah, unhappy woman! unhappy mother! how often I have pitied you! Yes, I remember you! Now that I no longer plead, now that I can live a little in the past, I sometimes read over the old lawsuits in which I have figured. That of your son recently fell under my eyes. I saw again the court of assizes, the jury, the judges, the attorney-general; I saw you sitting some steps from that miserable creature, the cause of all your unhappiness. I heard still that heart-piercing shriek, which you uttered when that unjust condemnation was pronounced. Yes, unjust, I still think, and always shall. My client ought to have been acquitted. He would have been, had it not been for that accusation of robbery, which threw a false light upon the case. Five years of hard labor for a moment of rashness! for it was nothing else. I said so. I said it after the trial: I repeated it a thousand times, and repeat it still. Poor young man! so interesting, so charming! How he loved you! Never did a client inspire me with so much sympathy. I wept, as you know, because I could not save him. Ah! beneath the lawyer's gown there is more heart than people generally think. The public says to itself: 'He is eloquent in order to convince the jury; he weeps to excite sympathy. He is not really



affected himself, his tears are feigned.' Ah, how often the public is mistaken, and how often it has happened to us all during the assizes to shed *real* tears! But tell me, he has not suffered his condemnation, I imagine. You have obtained his pardon, or at least a commutation of penalty?"

"No," said she, sadly.

"It has been refused you? Why did you not apply to me? I have friends in the administration of justice. I would have taken you to them, and all their kindness would have been used in your behalf."

"I had thought, my dear sir, of applying to you, but my son begged me not to do so. He wished to suffer punishment to the full extent. 'I wish,' said he, 'to be square with society, which I have offended by yielding to a hasty passion. Society has condemned me to five years of hard labor, and I will serve out the sentence. After that I shall be square with her; no one shall have a right to reproach me with my fault, and I shall be able to hold my head up.'"

"Another illusion of youth," said the advocate. "Your son must have recovered from his error by this time. One is never square with society when he has had the misfortune to incur certain condemnations. Alongside of *legal* penalties, so to speak, there are penalties called *accessory*, against which many enlightened jurists have protested in vain down to the present time."

He opened the Code which he, from habit, always had at hand, and read:

"Article 47 of the Code Penal:

"Persons condemned to hard labor . . . shall be, after they have served out their time, and during their whole life, under the surveillance of the high police."

"My son," said Madame Du Hamel, "escaped that surveillance."

"How did he manage?" exclaimed the advocate. "I do not understand it."

"At the moment of being set at liberty, a place of residence was appointed for him,

and which he must never leave, under penalty——"

"Under penalty," continued Monsieur X—— "of disobeying that other article of the same code, which declares that every infringement of the regulations touching the individuals under the surveillance of the high police shall be punished by the court of correction, by a penalty which, if the judge thinks proper, may extend to five years of imprisonment."

"We are acquainted with that article," said Madame Du Hamel. "And yet my son," she added, in a trembling voice, "burnt up the directions which had been given him as to the course he should take on being set at liberty, changed his name, that all traces of him might be lost, and came to settle down with me in Paris."

"In Paris, where both of you have lived a long time!" exclaimed Monsieur X——; "and you were not afraid of being known?"

"Who could have recognized us, sir? Before spending five years at Toulon, George had lived, you know, for a long time in America. He left Paris at twenty years of age, and returned to it at thirty. This was a period of ten years, during which the visage undergoes a sort of transformation; the features are formed and developed. He was a youth, almost a child; he becomes a man. Then the terrible emotions he has experienced: his two last years in America near that adored, detestable woman; his trial, his condemnation, his five years at Toulon, five years of incessant and terrible physical and moral suffering; the want of sleep, the bad food, the hardest of labors in the arsenal and in the port; in the winter exposed to the mistral, or cold northwest wind; in the summer, under an implacable sun, with a jacket and woolen pants for dress, with a skull-cap on his head, and chains about his ankles. No fire, no shade, no covering to protect him from the cold of night, no straw to rest his fatigued body upon! Ah, sir! such griefs, such privations, such suffer-



ings change a man, I can assure you, and give to his physiognomy quite another character, and render him unrecognizable. On two or three occasions, though he goes out but seldom, he has found himself in the presence of some old college or school companion, to whom his features recalled no remembrance of his personality."

"But, madame, did you not formerly have both friends and acquaintances in Paris?"

"No. Since the departure of my husband for America, now nearly twenty years ago, I had retired from the world. I lived alone with my son in a corner of the suburb St. Germain, far, very far from the quarter in which I now live. The few persons I used to see then are either not living, or have left Paris. Why, sir, you yourself did not recognize me just now! And yet, only eight years ago, during the three months that George's trial was being prepared, I used to see you every day, and you had long conversations with me. Ah, it is because *I* am very much changed also! I have suffered much! I have shared all his sufferings. I may say that there were two of us undergoing this condemnation."

Silent and seated at her side, Monsieur X——waited for her to go on.

"Yes," said she, "I went and took up my abode at Toulon, on the wharf, and near the arsenal. From my window I could sometimes see him at work in the port, or pass in a boat with his companions in chains, under the direction of a keeper. Ah, sir, what a painful spectacle for a mother's heart! I do not believe there is any torment comparable to that! How I endured it I cannot tell. But could I leave him? Ought I not to sustain his courage by my presence, and help him to keep the oath I had extorted from him not to commit suicide? He knew where I lived. From certain parts of the arsenal it was possible for him to get a glimpse of my window. He did not distinguish my features, but he could

perceive a shadow in the distance, through space, and continued working and suffering, with his eyes directed to that shadow."

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## XX.

TEARS fell from her eyes as she thus spoke, and the old advocate, though experienced in all sorts of emotions, evinced signs of unusual feeling.

They both remained silent for a moment, when he said to her, affectionately,—

"You are now reunited. Are you happy?"

"We were," replied she, drying her tears; "we were living together quietly, in perfect solitude, far from the indiscreet and curious, more concealed and unknown in Paris than we should ever have been in a provincial town; we were congratulating ourselves on the course we had adopted, when—Ah, sir, give me advice! I have no one of whom I can ask it, and have thought of you, to whom I am under so many obligations, whose discretion I well know; on you who have pitied me, who have loved us, and whom we also love in return."

She gave him a detailed account of the events that had occurred in the life of her son for the last six months.

He was desperately loved, and he loved in return. Yes, he was in love! What more natural? Does not love attract love? He loved with the ardor of a heart still young, which had not beaten for eight years; which an injudicious passion had formerly controlled, but which had recently allowed itself to be touched by seductions new to him, and unknown until this day, namely, goodness, charms, grace, distinction, and innocent ingenuousness.

George had a long time resisted this



love. He had fought against it, had absented himself, but now confessed he was conquered.

What was to be done? Should he now flee again?

But his future, his happiness, was at stake. After suffering so much, did he not deserve to be happy? The question perhaps also was one of life; at all events, that of her whom he loved.

The question was, whether he should accept the hand that was offered him, and be married!

Could he do it? To disclose his past life was an impassable barrier between him and her. But if he should not disclose it, and the time should come when it would be known!

This situation was for a long time explicitly discussed by Madame Du Hamel, when she ceased, and waited for Monsieur X—— to be kind enough to give her his advice. The lawyer's answer was not long waited for.

"Before all things," said he, "before discussing the marriage of your son in a moral point of view, ought we not to examine the practical side of the question? In order to be married, papers and facts are necessary. Where are yours? The record of your son's birth, your marriage contract, and the fact of the decease of your husband, will inform everybody that your name is Du Hamel, and you tell me that you have, for prudential reasons, changed your name. It is doubtless to this precaution that you owe the tranquillity which you enjoy. Are you going to disturb it, attract public attention, and revive remembrances almost effaced? How shall we explain to the family with which you wish to be connected, that after being called for so long a time by another name, we are all at once called Du Hamel, in the church and elsewhere?"

She had listened without interrupting him; and when he had ceased speaking, she replied,—

"We shall not be obliged to resume

the name of Du Hamel. That which we now bear, and which I took after the condemnation of my son, is the only one which legally belongs to us. My husband, at the time he was spending in Paris a very considerable fortune, which he afterwards repaired in America, lived in an elegant, vain, and titled circle, in which his plebeian name did not sound well enough; so he thought he would add to it that of Du Hamel, which he found in an old family parchment. Gradually, as it often happens, the first name disappeared, and there remained only the second, which he made me acquire the habit of bearing, and which was afterwards borne by my son. But I repeat it, it does not belong to us; not the least trace of it is to be found in our papers, and we hastened to quit it and return to our veritable name, which, fortunately, has for a long time been forgotten."

"Then," said Monsieur X——, "the material obstacle disappears. Let us examine the question in a moral point of view. On the one hand is a serious, threatening, certain danger, the happiness of the two persons in the case, their compromised existence, or at least the existence of one of them. On the other hand, there are eventual perils, improbable indeed, if certain precautions are taken, and especially if it is considered that, for three years, no disquieting circumstance has presented itself, and that life has been passed in perfect tranquillity."

They conversed thus for a long time. When they separated, Monsieur X—— said to Madame Du Hamel, at the same time cordially pressing her offered hand,—

"I thank you for having come to see me. This proof of confidence, given me by one of the most respectable women of my acquaintance, has been to me exceedingly touching. Tell your son that I have never ceased to esteem him, and that the greatest sorrow of my life is,



that I was not able to gain his case. Press his hand for me, and wish him, in my place, all the happiness which he truly deserves."

\* \* \* \* \*

On the first of October, of the same

year, the marriage of Monsieur George Gérard with Mademoiselle Marcelle de Brives was celebrated at the mayor's office, then in the church, in the presence of a small number of friends. After the ceremony the happy couple set out for Italy.



## PART III.—THE HIGH POLICE.

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### I.

THE question whether the present government has acted wisely in maintaining the law which suppresses public gambling-houses upon French territory, has been several times raised during the last few years.

By the aid of arguments of a certain value, the so-called literary press has attempted to show that morality had gained nothing by this suppression; but that, on the contrary, it had lost by it, and that gambling-houses ought to be not only tolerated, but authorized, patronized, and put in the number of establishments of public utility.

The serious, or religious, journals have persistently exclaimed against this pretension, and eloquently sustained a position diametrically the opposite of that of their confrères. Of course, neither of the two parties has succeeded in convincing the other, and the public does not yet know to which opinion it should give the preference.

We do not intend to take sides in this discussion, except so far as to state that, since the attempt to suppress gambling-houses, the passion for gambling has been developed in France in a fearful manner. Gambling is practiced in every class of society, and in every hole and corner of Paris. The law is in some way or other always evaded, and the police is powerless to prevent it.

\* \* \* \* \*

We appeal, for confirmation of our statement, to the tenant of the little hotel

in Neuilly Avenue, well known to the élite of Paris.

When she came to settle among us, she was about twenty-five years of age, with sixty thousand francs in her pocket-book, and an indemnity of thirty thousand which she could realize in a short time, together with a devoted friend, young enough to have no doubt about anything, a sort of provincial sheathed with Parisian, intelligent, and understanding business as one understands it in our large commercial cities, and enjoying that precocious experience peculiar to persons who frequent the Bois de Boulogne, the Champs-Élysées, the Boulevard de la Madeleine, etc. And this is the conversation which the woman in question had with her friend, very near the time when the first part of this story ended, which had for its title, *Une Fille de Couleur*, or "The Girl of Color:"

"Well, what is to be done now? I must give up all my long-cherished plans, that existence that I thought so beautiful, those feasts, that luxury, that reputation of a fashionable woman, and say that it has sufficed. Ah, the wretch!"

"Yes, yes," replied her interlocutor, in a light and almost ironical tone, flourishing in the air a stick he had always in his hand, "he is a miserable man, I confess it for the thousandth time. But you are avenged, rather cruelly too. If he has done you an injury, you have done him a greater one."

"Indeed!" exclaimed she with transport, "do you think so? I was born for a noisy and animated existence, in broad daylight; and here I am, condemned to



live in silence, solitude, and shade! I *was* splendidly beautiful,—yes, *splendidly* beautiful, that is the word; everybody used it in speaking of me,—you, the very first, and I am become hideous. When I used to pass along the street, when I appeared in a public place, people stopped to look at me, and made a circle around me. A long murmur of admiration came from the crowd, and fell upon my delighted ear. But now, when they see me, they turn away their heads and avoid me. I read pity and disgust in every eye. Your friends, whom you had formerly introduced to me, have all abandoned me. You alone have the courage to look me in the face.”

“In the first place, *I* have all sorts of courage. My friends are fools, imbeciles. Your face lacks something desirable, I confess. It has lost a little of its charm; but *pretty* faces are to be met with by the hundreds. What, however, one does *not* find is a figure like yours, shoulders of a perfect model, a bust— Ah, what opulence! Hands and feet of a child! Has not the Venus of Milo passionate admirers, although she is incomplete? For *me*, you are a Venus, minus the head.”

It was in this style that Victor Mazilier used to flatter Cora. (Our readers have already become acquainted with these two personages in our first part.) It was thus that he gained a great influence over this woman of color, who was vain like all of her race. George du Hamel, in adoring her when she was beautiful, had only paid to her the tribute that was due. His admiration had not flattered her, and she remained mistress of herself,—that is to say, arrogant, cold and cruel at times.

Victor Mazilier, on the contrary, by praising her beauty when she complained of her ugliness, by discovering to her charms which he seemed to prefer to those which she had lost, made her satisfied in some measure with herself, gave her confidence in her worth, revived hope in that desperate heart, and, from a motive

we shall hereafter learn, rendered her indispensable to himself.

But the compliments of Victor Mazilier had not appeased Cora's wrath. The blow she had received was still too recent to allow her to preserve her *sang-froid* when she called up certain reminiscences.

“Ah, you think me sufficiently avenged,” said she, “because he has been condemned to five years of hard labor. Five years! Why, he will come out of his prison young, elegant and charming, as he was when I loved him!—for I *did* love him, the monster! I loved him when I looked at him! Yes, at that time I worshiped form. *I* was beautiful, and it was rendering homage to my own beauty to admire that of others. But *now* I make less account of physical qualities; you know something about that, my dear Mazilier.”

“I am not very loveable,” said he, without seeming to be hurt; but he added mentally, “you shall pay for that.”

She continued,—

“*He* has been condemned to five years of hard labor; and *I*, through him, to a punishment for life! He will leave the galleys and enjoy life, while I shall remain always ugly and hideous! Formerly State prisoners were branded on the shoulder. Now it is their victims who carry eternally on their visage the mark of their blows. Ah, you think my vengeance is satisfied. Well, if I find him again some day, you will see!”

“Very well, I shall see,” said Victor Mazilier, calmly; “but in the meantime these complaints are useless. Let us think rather of what is going to become of you. You are not willing to return to Havre, I understand that; and you wrote to me to meet you in Rouen, and here I am. Do you intend to locate yourself in this city? I can assure you that you would soon get mortally tired of it.”

“No matter,” said she, “I no longer hope to enjoy myself much in this world. But I will not stay in Rouen. Half of



its inhabitants have seen me in public places, and they point me out when I go into the street. Ah, that shows that I am known!"

"Do you think of returning to New Orleans?"

"Never!" said she, emphatically. "Do you think of such a thing? Return disfigured to a place where I was known as so charming, where I passed for the most beautiful! Ah, the Creole women would be but too happy to see me come back in this condition!"

"Then there is Paris, where you thought of going at first. Paris, where one is very easily concealed, how little soever he may desire it, where nothing astonishes, and where people are too much occupied in looking at beautiful women to——"

"To turn and gaze upon the disfigured or ugly, you mean," said she. "Pray, go on, dear friend, don't feel embarrassed. You know that I use no self-deception in this matter. Done! I will go to Paris, and then what? What quarter shall I live in? Where shall I be best concealed? I wait for your advice."

"In the first place," replied Victor Mazilier after a little reflection, faithful to his *system*, or perhaps convinced of what he said, "I assure you that you exaggerate your physical defects. The pistol-ball of George du Hamel has passed through your upper lip, plowed the cheek, and deformed the lower part of your face, I acknowledge. But your eyes have remained the handsomest in the world, your forehead is that of a sovereign, and your hair the blackest I ever saw. In short, you have beautiful remains, which many women would envy. In broad daylight the scars appear deep, and the wounds still gaping. They attract the eye and divert attention from the charms you have preserved. But in the evening, in partial darkness, thanks to the effects of light which you will study and know how to turn to advantage, your eyes will shine with all their brilliancy, your hair will have a peculiar effect, your forehead will

be resplendent, and the upper portion of your visage will have such charms that people will not think of looking any lower."

"You are a flatterer," said she, affectedly.

"Why, no, no! I tell the truth. But for fear of repeating myself, I do not speak of the dazzling effect produced by your shoulders and bust, when you dress boldly, according to the fashion. When some scientific milliner sets out the elegance of your figure, and the rest!—yes, yes, you are a belle by night."

She listened to him with eagerness, and gradually allowed herself to be convinced.

He continued:

"I have thought a good deal about your position, and know perfectly well what will be proper for you. You must now avoid the multitude, the fashionable world, and all noisy pleasures. You will need a circle of friends and private amusements. The first impression of those who shall be introduced to you will not be favorable, I know. But after this, they will, little by little, become accustomed to your—little disagreeablenesses. Soon even they will forget them, and no longer see anything but your perfections of every kind. But you must never receive any women into your private circle. Let your door be absolutely closed against them. You might be perfectly plain, or ugly, and they would perhaps show you indulgence; but your incontestable beauties would excite their jealousy. They would not pardon them. They would get revenge for what remains to you, by calling attention to what is wanting. Be severe also in regard to artists of all kinds, especially men of letters. They are dangerous people in a drawing-room. In order to appear talented or witty, they will rend and tear you in pieces. That they may deserve a reputation for originality, they will tell you to your face many unpleasant truths. To give a proof of independence, they will break your windows.



Your familiar friends must be men of the world, and of the best. They only conceal their thoughts and their bad impressions. They look upon a woman only to admire her, and speak to her only to compliment her. In the company of such you will always believe you are charming, and forget your—ennui, and——”

She interrupted him to say :

“Where shall I find those familiar friends? I have read in New Orleans, in one of your books published in France, that it was necessary, in our days, to give up forming what was formerly called a *salon*. Fashionable people dine out in the city, run to soirées, theatres, and balls. It is very rare that they return two days in succession to the same house to sit down and think quietly by the fire-side.”

“You are perfectly right,” said Victor Mazilier. “For an American, you are admirably well acquainted with our manners. Indeed, the prospect of finding at your house arm-chairs, fire in the chimney, and of enjoying a lively and animated conversation, would not induce two persons to make you a visit. But you can offer to your guests other pleasures,—some *great attraction*, as the English say.”

“What?”

“Gambling,” replied he, looking at Cora.

“What! Do you wish——”

“I wish for nothing; but if I were in your place, I would say to myself, ‘I have a capital of about a hundred thousand francs, which, invested in the most advantageous way possible, would afford me hardly seven or eight thousand francs’ income. That is insufficient for living in Paris.’ Is that your opinion?”

“Is it yours?”

“It is mine.”

“Then I share it. Go on.”

Encouraged by Cora, Victor Mazilier developed his plan:

“We say, then,” he replied, “that eight thousand francs’ income would not

be sufficient to live upon. But you have not eight thousand francs’ income. You possess a disposable capital of a hundred thousand francs,—an insignificant sum, perhaps, in the hands of a man obliged, under pain of falling in public esteem, to respect numerous prejudices and to make the best of his money legally; an enormous sum, on the contrary, in the hands of a woman who does not belong to the fashionable world, who has no definite place in society, who is not obliged to trouble herself about any one, and whom exaggerated scruples cannot disquiet.”

“You are right,” said Cora. “For whom should I trouble myself? What social practices have I to respect?”

“Certain ones, which I will mention hereafter. Let us attend to the most urgent. In your place, I would like for my hundred thousand francs to bring me in at least, you understand, at least from twenty-five to thirty thousand francs income.”

“I would like to have it so. Develop, my dear friend, develop your idea.”

“I will do so. In the first place, you will set out for Paris in quest of a suitable apartment, or, which would be better, a small isolated mysterious hotel, far from noise and bustle, but in a quarter frequented by fashion: the avenue of Eylau, of Friedland, the first houses of Neuilly, for example. When your visitors call upon you, they should have to turn aside as little as possible from the way to the woods of Boulogne; but enough, however, to cause the carriages following to lose sight of them and not know where they are going. The hotel in question being once *hired*, not bought, which would diminish your capital, we will proceed to furnish it. The greatest simplicity should be observed in the furnishing of your sleeping room, toilet cabinet, and, finally, all rooms which are to be kept shut to visitors. But, on the other hand, in all those that are to open to them, as the large drawing-room, smoking-room, *boudoir*, dining-room, we must display not



luxury, but good taste and comfort. Everywhere thick carpets to deaden the noise, ample silk curtains and soft divans. No tables set in the middle of the drawing-room, as if intended for gamblers. A hostess must be coaxed before allowing her guests to commence playing. Only the cards are to be all ready in a drawer, the tables are waiting in the embrasure of a window, and the servants are trained, at a signal, to place them in the middle of the room. By the way, as we are on the subject of furniture, let there be no chandeliers, no wax candles, I beg of you. Gamblers have, almost all of them, weak eyes. They want lamps with green shades. Is that understood?"

"So much the better understood as, for cause, I dislike the light myself."

"I have already told you that you will be enchanting in a subdued light."

"With my elbows resting on the card table, eh!" said she, in tones evincing a certain bitterness, "the lower part of my face hidden in my hands, so as to allow only my eyes, forehead, and hair to be seen. Look, like that?"

"Perfect; you have devised the right position. I have never been troubled on your account. Shall I go on?"

"You will much oblige me."

"Go on, it is, then. The question of furniture being settled, there remains that about servants. You have, doubtless, in New Orleans, been accustomed to the service of negroes. I can furnish you with one who comes to me from Bourbon. Do you want him?"

"No," said she, "no negroes. I have had enough of them. I have a horror of the race. I want white people in my service."

"White they shall be, then, and I suppress my negro. You will need a boy at the front door, a valet de chambre to introduce persons, to answer the bell, and serve at the table. You will dress him in the English fashion, which is in good taste. No head man; it is too dear, and you have no need of him. People will

never dine with you, but only sup. One cook will suffice for the preparation of the cold dishes, etc. You will require that she shall have a specialty, a skill in preparing a predilection dish. I will give her a recipe for roast lobster with Madeira wine, and absinthe cutlets; this is an excellent dish, and will cause you to be talked of all over Paris. No coachman, you understand, for you will never go out, or as rarely as possible; a carriage for the hour will suffice. It remains for you to find, for your personal service, a femme de chambre. Do you wish for a young woman?"

"Yes, as young as possible."

"Pretty?"

"That would be no objection."

"If you will advertise, the girl-brokers will furnish the article. Well, the house is furnished and ready for business; now——"

"Now, let us speak of the guests destined to inhabit it. Where shall I find them? You advise me to receive only people of fashion. Do they not all form a part of some circle? You have told me so. What interest will they have in quitting it, and coming to my house?"

"I will tell you. The members of a circle well-constituted may be divided into three classes: those who never play, and who are the most numerous: those who indulge in respectable plays, such as whist, piquet, Boston; and finally those who play only games of chance. These would rather meet in a house like yours, than in their own circles, where they have, on all sides, eyes fixed upon them, where their doings are observed, judged severely, reported and published the next day in the papers: terrible indiscretions which may cause trouble in families. I count upon those timid and timorous gamblers to form for you the nucleus of the faithful."

Cora listened to him with attention. She understood instinctively that Victor Mazilier knew perfectly the subject he had undertaken to treat, and that his ex-



perience in such matters was most complete. She could trust to him and undertake anything with such a master, a veritable doctor of Parisian science. The assurance with which he expressed himself, his decided tone, the gestures accompanying his discourse, the use of his cane, and his attitudes, made a lively impression upon Cora. Like all people of color, she was captivated by jingle, noise, and parade. The simple and upright nature of George du Hamel had no power to captivate her, but she was dazzled by the allurements of Victor Mazilier.

"I have thus far spoken to you," said Mazilier, "of gamblers interested in concealing their errors, and to whom your hotel would offer a mysterious asylum. Every sum lost at gambling must be paid in twenty-four hours, and the name of every one who has neglected to do so is posted in the regular clubs; but at your house this unpleasant thing might be avoided. Ah! if some compassionate soul, a good soul like mine, for example, would say to them: 'I know a mysterious, discreet house, kept by a charming woman; you will meet there only with fashionable people, too well-bred to refuse to play with a gentleman because he is in debt and not able always to pay immediately when he has lost at cards.' Verily, verily, I say unto you, my dear Cora, that your house, well understood, well started, and well kept, must have, in a short time, immense success."

Victor Mazilier stopped to take breath. But Cora was too much interested to grant him a long respite, and, after giving him hardly time to light a cigar, she started new objections.

"The question which disquieted me just now," said she, "is now solved. My house has select and numerous guests. They are pleased with it, and accustomed to it. Are you not afraid that some fine day these habits may be disturbed?"

"By whom?" asked he, negligently discharging a mouthful of smoke.

"By the police," replied she.

"The police! What should it visit you for?"

"Have I not heard it said that one had not a right to give a chance to play or gamble in a continued, regular manner?"

"Nonsense! there is no law against it."

"Then why do we read so often in the papers that the police made a descent upon such or such an establishment?"

"It was a public place. The police had a right to watch it."

"A commissioner visited a person, lately, whose name I do not remember, living in Drouôt Street, in the third story——"

"Of a furnished house. Furnished houses, in some cases, may be considered as public."

"Would it be sufficient, then, according to what you say, to buy furniture, in order to keep a gambling-house without being interfered with?"

"No, indeed! But you have a right not to require your guests to pay you anything for your hospitality, and the permission given them to amuse themselves the best way they can."

She looked at him with astonishment, and said,—

"Then how do you suppose I am going to live? My furniture has cost me a good deal, I have a considerable rent to pay, numerous domestics, and expenses of all kinds."

"I expected you would come to that, my dear," said he, while lighting a new cigar by the one he had just finished. And when this important operation was finished, he resumed, in these terms,—

"I have not yet detailed to you all your expenses, but I will do it: you must supply your guests with cards every evening, and renew them, if necessary, during the night, and never allow them to pay for them. If they are thirsty, on a signal from you your valet will bring sherbet, ices, grogs, syrups of all sorts, punch, nay, even the best of champagne. If they are hungry they can pass into



the dining-room and help themselves at their leisure, and at your expense. Remember well this: it will be your privilege to see them gamble all night, but you must not touch the cards."

"For what purpose?"

"For the purpose of showing in an undeniable way that your receptions are very costly, and can bring you in no profit whatever."

"It would be difficult to entertain any doubt of that; but then——"

"Then, as you will receive only the fashionable, accustomed by education to the delicacies and proprieties of life, they will be anxious to indemnify you in an indirect way for all your expenses. They will first unite and offer you a *bijou* of a certain value. Then, when become more intimate on both sides, they will request you to buy the jewel yourself, and enclose the money in an envelope with some delicate compliment which will give no offense. If they make an unexpected gain, they will assure you that they had *mentally* associated you in the game, and will oblige you to take your part of the benefit. Finally, my beauty, you have a thousand sources of income which I could enumerate. I know all about how these things are managed, so give yourself no uneasiness about income. There, I have finished. You asked for advice, and I have given it, and defy you to find a better."

"Well, I think it is good," said she.

"Zounds! of course it is good. You might doubt it, if it were disinterested. If I should say to you, 'Do this, do that, and then adieu, the matter does not concern me,' it would be a different thing. But I have my own little interest in seeing you put my advice in practice, therefore it is of first quality."

"What interest?" asked Cora.

"Your wound," said he, "which brought you thirty thousand francs, has cost me a pension of six thousand, which my father used to give me."

"How so?" asked she.

Before answering, he extended himself at full length on the sofa, where he had been sitting since the beginning of this conversation.

"You ask me," said he, when he had comfortably located himself, "how your wound made me lose six thousand francs income. It is very simple. My father was angry on seeing the name of Mazilier, so justly esteemed in Havre, mentioned in a criminal suit, and his son cited as a witness. My deposition in the case, which he read in his paper, posted him up in regard to my doings at the time of your landing and on the day following. He shuddered at the idea of the dangers which his only son might incur with a woman like you, a woman into whose face a man fires a pistol through jealousy. He said to himself, 'If I stop his pension, he will hasten to return to his work in my office, and no longer be about the wharves on the arrival of emigrant women.' Hence the hint that I must no longer rely upon him unless I made myself remarkable for zeal and labor. But zeal and labor, you know, are not my forte. I would willingly pass two days and two nights in succession, sitting on a chair, turning cards; but to write letters for three hours in an office, which I confess is much less fatiguing, never! I paid no attention to the intimation of my father, and bade him affectionate adieus; and, if you see me now at Rouen, near you, it is because Rouen is on the way of every one who is, like me, going from Havre to Paris."

"Then you will accompany me?"

"I will," said he. "I am aiding you to find a small hotel. I furnish it with you. I procure servants for you, and give to your cook the famous recipe for lobster with Madeira wine, for absinthian cutlets. I install you as a princess, and forthwith go in search of the court which I have promised you. In three months it will be full, and in six months you will reap what you have sown."

"But what will become of you?"

"My life is all marked out. In the



daytime I sleep. The evenings and nights I spend at your house, if you are kind enough to allow it."

"Nothing more would be required to induce me to turn you out-of-doors. But your father has cut off your living; what will you do if you lose?"

"Oh, my dear friend, when one's name is Victor Mazilier, and he is the son of the richest ship-owner of Havre, he always finds money. Besides, if I must tell you the real truth, I shall *not* lose."

"How can you help it?"

"One does not lose when he is intelligent and master of himself; when the game, instead of being only a pleasure, becomes in some measure a means of existence. Up to the present time I have played a good deal, lost a good deal, and acquired an experience which will serve me for the rest of my life. I have made your fortune by giving you an idea; you will make mine by putting that idea in practice. Our interests are closely united. So much for the present, dear Cora, and now I must leave you. I have talked so much that I am dying with hunger. I am going to dine at the English hotel. I return at half-past seven; and if you like, we will leave to-morrow for Paris."

## II.

THIS plan was strictly followed. Had it been a bad one, Cora would certainly have adopted it with the same ardor. Had she not been, as we have said, dazzled and subjugated by Victor Mazilier, at first sight? Upon a suggestion from him, she would have committed the greatest follies; but though he was likely to be guilty of them, he was incapable of recommending them. Victor Mazilier was not a personality, he was a type. His character resembles that of many young men of our time. Under a trivial exterior is hidden a precocious experience. They have often,

at twenty years of age, a perfect knowledge of Parisian life. They know all the dangers of it. They have seen and studied everything. They know the price of things and their value. A glance is sufficient to enable them to tell to what class of society Madame X—— belongs, and what should be thought of her character. They pass often upon the men of their acquaintance excellent judgment.

A young man of twenty said recently, in our presence, to his father, "You do wrong to trust to Monsieur V——. He does not inspire me with confidence." Experience proved that the son was right. Must we say that the young men of our day are guilty of more indiscretions than their predecessors? We do not believe it. They are guilty of neither more nor less; but they commit their follies with a knowledge of cause, without illusion and without excuse. If they have a mistress, they know they are deceived, or else they affirm that they are, even when they do not believe it. They deny virtue, and are suspicious of honesty or good faith. When they lose at play, instead of saying they are unlucky, they say they have been robbed. If one boasts of great disinterestedness in their presence, they try to show that it is calculation. Devotedness in their eyes becomes platitude, religious practices hypocrisy, and misery a consequence of vice.

Thus the plan of Victor Mazilier was excellent, because it was based upon a perfect understanding of Parisian life, and upon the most ingenious means of satisfying vice.

At the entrance of Neuilly Avenue Cora found, on her arrival at Paris, a small hotel, between court and garden, which was furnished in the most intelligent manner, and became in a short time—thanks to the activity and numerous relations of Victor Mazilier—the rendezvous of some twenty gamblers, all persons of good company.

Admirably advised, and especially well served by a deep instinct, which, in cer-



tain women, takes the place of tact, she succeeded in taking a good position in this little circle of *habitués* and faithful ones. Before her accident, charming as she was, her situation, as mistress of a house receiving only men, might have been more difficult. Gambler though he may be, one thinks sometimes, while waiting for his turn, of looking at a pretty woman seated at your side. Some night, when one has gained, or doesn't wish to play any more for fear of losing, he goes and takes a seat by the side of her, and whispers a compliment in her ear. Soon rivalries are established, jealousies spring up, and discord breaks out in the camp of the faithful.

At the end of one year, the *maison* founded by Cora had acquired a great reputation, and was well patronized. If the situation of Cora became better daily, that of Mazilier kept pace with it, without departing a moment from his principles or being reproached with the least impropriety. Every evening, between ten and eleven, he would take his seat at the gambling-table, and take up the cards as coolly as a clerk takes his place at his desk and resumes the pen to which he owes his means of subsistence. He played with great prudence, risking only insignificant sums, but, thanks to his understanding of the game, it was rare that he lost at the end of the night, and his gains, almost daily repeated, constituted a kind of revenue.

"Ah, labor!" said he to Cora; "what a fine thing! To be able to dispense with one's family, and owe position only to one's self! Ah, what satisfaction!"

The gains of Victor assumed importance when added up, but were too small at the end of each evening to attract the attention of the other gamblers.

Very high games were played at Cora's. The losses were often tens of thousands, and small gamblers passed unnoticed. Thus but little notice was taken of young Mazilier, except to ask now and then what prerogative he en-

joyed in the house, and what was his exact position in relation to Cora.

Nobody could answer this question, so great was their reserve in their intercourse with each other. Cora didn't appear to make any difference between Victor and her guests; and the latter, when they retired at four, five, or six in the morning, had always for companion the son of the Havre shipowner.

It would be inexcusable in us to betray a secret which the two friends so carefully kept, but we may affirm that the influence exerted by Victor over Cora increased every day. He governed her completely, and had, so to speak, made her his slave.

But the blood of the slave is not always dormant. For a time its circulation may be arrested, yet, sooner or later, it is restored, and that blood, transmitted from generation to generation, begins to boil.

With her negroes and with George du Hamel Cora had behaved like a tyrant. She had avenged herself upon them for the domination under which her ancestors had lived. Born to obey, she had found a rude enjoyment in the exercise of command and tyranny. But the emancipated slave, tired of her liberty, had, of her own accord, given herself up to a master. She might have chosen one tall and handsome, generous and brave; but she had taken one small and ugly, weak and corrupt.

Haughty and arrogant with George du Hamel, she was humble and submissive with Victor Mazilier. She yielded blind obedience to his will, bent to his exigencies, and bore with his caprices. In private, he treated her as one would not treat the lowest courtesan, and she never complained. The fancy took him one day to beat her, as she had formerly beaten her mulatto girls, and she allowed him to do it.

On one single point, one only, she would never yield to him, but refused to think as he did. It was when the con-



versation turned upon George du Hamel. Sometimes Victor would seem to pity the fate of that unfortunate man, and would say,—

“He is suffering very cruelly for a momentary sally of passion.”

“Ah!” she would exclaim, “do you call that a momentary passion? you speak quite indulgently on the subject. In *my* opinion and in that of the jury, it was an attempt at assassination, followed by robbery.”

“Don’t annoy me any more about that robbery,” Victor would reply; “he never thought of robbing you. I have already forbidden you to repeat that calumny. It may have had its effect in preparing the case; by profession lawyers are disposed to believe the worst. For one, I have never for a moment believed your accusation, and you ought to bless me for not telling in court what I thought of it. It is true that the president did not ask my opinion on the subject.”

“You could not have missed it more than to have testified against me!”

“I ought, perhaps, to have done it. Was not *I* the cause of the angry emotion of that poor Du Hamel? I maintain the expression. If I had not paid court to you, if I had not taken you to dine in Paris Street, if we had not gone together to visit the country seats in the environs, the scene, which has terminated so unfortunately for him, would not have occurred.”

“How for *him*? Is it *him* whom you pity?”

“I pity him so much, that I have a proposition to make to you.”

“Let us see, it must be a pretty one.”

“Among your habitual guests, and those with whom you are most familiar, there is one who has, it is said, a great influence in the ministry of justice.”

“Who is he?”

“Monsieur De V——.”

“Well?”

“Request him to go to the pardoning office and obtain the remission of one-

half of George du Hamel’s penalty, or punishment. This is the time or never. The poor fellow has been in the galleys, it is now two years and a half. I rely on you for this move; for, I will not conceal it, I feel a very serious remorse, and this is the only means of appeasing it.”

“Well,” exclaimed she, “I shall do nothing to appease your remorse. Keep it.”

These scenes generally terminated badly. Mazilier, accustomed to the passive obedience of Cora, ended by getting into a passion. As an exception, he obtained nothing from her. The next day he thought of another thing, and said no more about Du Hamel. And so Cora imagined that he had dismissed the idea of getting her to take the course he recommended in regard to a remission of a half of Du Hamel’s sentence, and had undertaken it himself. She became uneasy at the idea that he might succeed, and shuddered at the thought that the man for whom she had sworn a mortal hatred might be free and happy.

This fear got such possession of her mind, that she resolved one day to know positively what to rely upon in regard to the fate of George du Hamel.

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### III.

It was in the beginning of July, and Cora’s rooms had been closed for a fortnight. In spite of their love of gambling, her patrons knew too well the art of living, to remain at Paris in this season of the year. They had gone to the sea-shore or to the springs, after agreeing to meet again in the little Hotel Neuilly at the end of September. One evening, as Victor was in conversation with Cora in the large drawing-room, she suddenly said to him,—

“Do you enjoy yourself much in Paris?”



"I?" said he, smothering a gape, "not the least in the world. I have nothing to do, and that makes me unhappy. When one is fond of labor of some kind, inaction is painful."

"Suppose we should travel," said she, timidly.

"I was thinking of that. But in what direction shall we go? The coasts of Normandy are interdicted to us: I should meet my family there. Switzerland is tiresome, Germany frightens me. I know myself; I should get to gambling there, and lose all my earnings for the year."

"What do you think," said she, "of a trip to the south?"

"The south! why, just think of the heat! Do you wish to see me entirely melt away? I have none too much flesh now."

She understood that it would not do to insist, and turned the difficulty:

"I mean by the south," said she, "Luchon, Biarritz, the Pyrenees, etc."

"Very well. The Pyrenees, yes, that is an idea. I am not very partial to mountains, because I am not tall, and they make me seem still less so. But they are cool and refreshing. Let us try them."

Two days after, Cora took with Victor the line from Paris to Bordeaux. From Bordeaux they went to Bayonne and the Pyrenees. But as Victor was soon tired and could hardly remain two days in one place, they had in a short time run over all the interesting points of this part of France.

"And what shall we do now?" said they.

"Since we have nothing better to do," said Cora, "why not visit Bordeaux, which we have only crossed over?"

"Well, Bordeaux, then. Ah, the summer; good heavens! The summer, how ridiculous it is! When will winter return, that I may resume my work!"

After passing twenty-four hours at Bordeaux they took the southern line, stopped at the principal stations, and ar-

rived at Cette. Then Cora manifested a desire to see Marseilles.

"Why," said her companion, "you are insatiable, my dear."

"It is, I am told, a very curious city."

"Pardon me! all cities are alike. He who has seen Perpignan has seen Marseilles."

"What do you say? Compare a seaport with——"

"Cora," said he, interrupting her.

"My friend?"

"Look me in the face."

"I do."

"You are fooling with me, are you not?"

"Not in the least."

"What is your object in taking me to Marseilles?"

"I have no object, my friend. I——"

"You have one. I know you."

Then suddenly he exclaimed, "Am I a fool, that I had not guessed her object sooner? She has been dragging me after her for a month; she condemns me to an insupportable life; she puts me in front of mountains which humiliate me; she makes me eat all the dust of France, and—— ah, what a roundabout way!"

"I don't understand you. What roundabout way do you speak of? We have taken none."

"Ah, indeed! Is it not roundabout to go by the way of Bayonne and the Pyrenees in order to go from Paris to Toulon?"

"Toulon!" said she.

"Yes, Toulon. Pray cease playing astonishment. Do I not know you? Cora, you have deceived me. Since your departure from Paris you have been aiming for Toulon."

"For what purpose?"

"She asks that question as if I didn't know her good little heart! You wish to visit the prison at Toulon, and learn for yourself something about George du Hamel."

"Not so, I assure you. Far from me the thought."



"Truly?"

"Truly."

"Then, my dear, we will leave this evening for Paris."

"But——"

"You hesitate. I had guessed right. Be frank, or, if not, I declare to you that in twenty-four hours the avenue of Neuilly shall see us returned. Come, you wish to see him, do you not? Confess it!"

"Well, yes," said she, suddenly.

"Very well. You are very glad to know if he is still in prison at Toulon, and if the steps which you have taken to obtain his pardon have succeeded."

"I have taken none."

"Zounds! But you wish to know if others have attempted to do something?"

"Yes,—you, for example."

"Oh, it is not the desire that has been wanting on my part, but I have been so busy this winter. Besides, our steps, perhaps, were useless. Suppose that by chance he had made his escape. Have you ever thought of that?"

"Often; and that is why——"

"I understand," said he, interrupting her; "I have guessed it. You would not be sorry to be sure of his presence in prison from your own knowledge, *de visu*. I speak Latin with a facility which frightens me. You would rejoice at the idea of finding with chains around his ankles the man you have so much loved!"

"Him who has made me suffer so much? Yes, I would."

"Well, my friend, why did you not say so before? It was useless to take me to this place. Let us leave for Toulon."

"Ah, do you consent——"

"I consent to see this unfortunate man,—to try to assist him,—to obtain his pardon if I can. I have need of emotion. Gambling no longer affords me any. The galleys and workshops of Toulon will give it. I have anticipated you, and shall do all in my power to be useful to your mortal enemy."

"Bah!" said she. "At Toulon you can do nothing, as you have no connections there. At Paris you will forget him."

Two days after this conversation they stopped in one of the best hotels of Toulon.

#### IV.

PERMISSION to visit the prisons and places of confinement in France is, perhaps, too readily granted to strangers. To say nothing of the humiliation a prisoner may feel, on finding himself face to face with persons who stare at him, analyze his features, and who may have known him in a better situation, it is certainly painful to a man deprived of his liberty to be in contact with people enjoying all their rights and obeying only their own desires. If visitors knew how to behave themselves when visiting prisons it would be a different thing. But many run through a prison or place of confinement with as much indifference as if they were visiting a museum. They stop before certain convicts as they would at the Louvre to contemplate certain pictures to which their attention had been called. They talk of their business and pleasures without thinking that they are heard and envied. Women especially err in this respect, and too often forget the proprieties of the place.

On their arrival at Toulon Victor and Cora went in search of authority to visit the arsenal and its dependences,—that is, the *bagne*, or place of confinement, which is a part of it.

The keeper of the hotel where they stopped gave them the proper directions for accomplishing their object.

One morning, about eleven o'clock, after rapidly visiting several parts of the arsenal, they called on the commissary of the prison, who ordered a galley com-



mander to direct them in their exploration.

"Can we see everything?" asked Victor, while following his guide.

"You will see one of the principal wards, the infirmary, and several shipyards where the convicts work, and so on. But the public, except by special permission, cannot enter certain other places."

"What ones?"

"Those where certain dangerous men are kept, whom we cannot trust."

"Let us not go in that direction," said Victor.

They began their visit in company with their guide, who gave them information upon all things; but Cora hardly listened to him. It was George du Hamel she wanted to see, for he alone interested her. She was afraid, however, to ask any direct questions. If the prison opens its doors to strangers, it shuts them against people who seem to be guided in their visit by another sentiment than curiosity. Escapes are so frequent at Toulon, that every precaution is necessary to prevent them.

However, with a little address, she was soon able to question the guide without exciting his suspicions.

"Have you at this time in prison any *celebrity*?" asked she.

"Nothing in particular," said he. "Everything we had in that line left yesterday for Cayenne."

"Ah, that's a pity. I should like to have seen the physiognomy of some of your heroes. I often read the Court Gazette, and hoped to find here some of the characters that I have seen mentioned there."

"We still have perhaps a few," said the guide, deceived by the affected indifference of Cora, "if madame would designate them."

"Do you not know them by name?"

"Very rarely, madame. The convicts have numbers inscribed on their clothes. When we have to call them it is only

necessary to look at them. We know some of them also by their crimes. Do you see that very small man passing yonder?"

"He is not four feet high," replied Cora.

"Ah, good heavens!" said Victor, straightening up and trying to appear taller, "what crime can one have committed who is no taller than that? A theft only, at the most."

"He is an assassin," said the guide.

"Well, his victim must have been very accommodating. He must have stooped to enable him to strike. Whom, pray, did he kill?"

"Three small children. While his accomplices were assassinating the father and mother, he had been ordered to keep the children from giving the alarm. He found nothing better adapted to this object than to shut them up in a trunk and sit down upon the cover. When he lifted the cover the children did not cry out any more, for they were dead. His accomplices denied it, maintaining that it was a useless crime and that they had not ordered it."

"Villainous man," said the young Mazilier, eyeing the little convict.

"That sort of crime does not interest me much," said Cora. "As a woman, I like those trials in which jealousy plays a part. What was the name of that young man," said she to Victor, "who was condemned, two or three years ago, for an attempt to assassinate his mistress? You know very well, my dear, for you read to me the trial."

"Yes, yes, I remember, but the name escapes me. Wait a moment," continued he, trying *apparently* to remember; "was it not—No,—I am confounding it with another trial. Ah! *now* I have it,—I've got it: George du Hamel."

"That's it," said Cora.

"Do you know him?" asked she of the guide.

"George du Hamel? no, madame; no. Three years ago, do you say?"



"Yes, from two and a half to three years, isn't it, Victor?"

"Perfectly right, my friend; your memory is very exact."

"Was he condemned for life?" said the guard.

"No," answered Mazilier, "only for five years."

"Five years!" said the guide, disdainfully; "we pay no attention to those persons here: they are small criminals."

It would not do to let the conversation drop, and so Cora spoke,—

"I thought you might have noticed the individual of whom I speak. There cannot be in the prison many persons of his class. He was a very elegant young man, said the Court Gazette."

"Allow me a word," said the guard; "was he not about thirty years of age?"

"That was very nearly the age the papers gave, and they added that he was tall and robust."

"That's it, that's it; I remember now, I know him. I have often conducted him to his work in the port; I was director of the chain of which he was a part. He is No. 2007. Ah, if I had to deal only with men like him! He is a lamb, madame, he is a veritable lamb!"

"A lamb that sometimes fires pistols, if I may depend on the report of his trial. Then," resumed she, "his keepers are satisfied with his conduct? and his comrades, what do they think of him?"

"Ah, they made his life hard during the first part of his stay in prison!"

"Indeed?"

"Yes; as he never talks, and keeps himself shut up, they accused him of making trouble and acting as a spy on his comrades. So there was no kind of misery which they did not imagine against him."

"And you could not prevent that?" said Victor.

"Impossible, sir; each of us has often more than twenty men to look after."

"And have his vexations continued?"

"Oh, no, madame; as he has a better

education than the rest of them, he was able to render them a multitude of little favors, such as drawing up petitions, writing letters; and thus——"

"So," continued Cora, "he enjoys the esteem of the prison. Can we catch a glimpse of this humble convict?"

"It is possible we may fall in with him where the ships are being built."

"Let us, then, cast an eye upon the ships in process of construction," said she.

## V.

VICTOR MAZILIER and Cora, preceded by their guide, had, a moment ago, left the buildings connected with the prison. They were going through the arsenal, where one meets at every step, in the hours of labor, columns of convicts under the direction of their overseers.

Cora sought to recognize George du Hamel among all those unfortunate men, but could not succeed.

"That you have set your heart upon assuring yourself of his presence here," said Victor, "I well understand. You are a woman,—a little more of a woman even than others,—that is, more vindictive. You cannot pardon an act which has affected you in what you held most dear in the world—your beauty; that is understood. But he is still in prison,—you know it now; he has not been pardoned, he has not escaped, and is undergoing his punishment. Your vengeance is going on, and what do you wish more? What good will it do you to be running about here in the sun to get a look at your victim?"

"That man may have been mistaken," said she, pointing to the officer who preceded them. "I wish to be satisfied for and by myself. Otherwise, it would have been sufficient to send one of my friends to the Secretary of the Interior,



or of the Navy, and they would have given me information nearly as exact."

Suddenly, Victor took her by the arm, and said,—

"An idea occurs to me."

"And what is it?"

"Do you still love him?"

"I love him? I hate him——"

"Ah!" said he, "has it not been often asserted that between love and hate there is but little difference?"

"You are crazy!"

"Not so crazy. You are capable of loving him just because you suffer on account of him. I did not really obtain command over you till the day when I began to maltreat and abuse you. One must expect everything from a charming nature like yours."

Their guide had just approached, in order to show them a park of cannon-balls.

"Very curious, very curious," said Mazilier; "but, by the way, this walk in the arsenal appears to me very useless. How can we expect to meet here the individual we were speaking of just now? You told me that he behaved himself very well, and was well educated. He ought not to be employed in hard labor."

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the overseer. "I was with the commissary last year, when the call was made for No. 2007, for the purpose of proposing to him to work in the office, and he refused."

"Why, pray?"

"He said that he had been condemned to hard labor,—that is, to corporeal labor,—and that he was unwilling to evade it."

"Ah! truly said; that is very good," said Mazilier; and, turning to Cora, he added, "There are many points of contact between George du Hamel and myself. Neither of us can endure the labor of the desk, and we prefer the severest hard labor."

The overseer, condemned to silence by his profession, and delighted to have an

opportunity of chatting with persons so distinguished as Victor and Cora, continued,—

"No. 2007, as a reward for his good conduct, enjoys here only one favor, that of having no companion in chains."

"Ah!" said Mazilier, "has he no chains on his ankles?"

"I beg your pardon, sir; a ring is riveted around his ankle, and the end of a chain is attached to it, but it is not joined to the chain of any other prisoner. He can conceal it under his pants, and walk about alone."

"That is an advantage," said Cora. "Your 2007 is very fortunate in his confinement."

"Suppose you should take his place?" said Victor.

The guard laughed heartily at this amiable pleasantry, and Cora, profiting by his good humor, slipped a louis into his hand, which produced a still better effect than the wit of young Mazilier.

They had now arrived at that part of the arsenal reserved for the construction of ships of war. An immense three-decker, just finished, and waiting only a high tide to leave the stocks or to be launched, loomed up before them. Near the place were some fifty prisoners, occupied in carrying timber destined to make for the ship a sort of bed or cradle, to take her to the sea when the day for launching should be fixed on.

"It is in this direction that we shall find our man," said the guard.

"Ah, do you think so?" said Victor, who felt a little excited.

"I am certain of it. They employ at this part of the arsenal persons who have only a short time to spend in prison, and to whom the idea of escaping does not occur."

"Ah! are escapes to be feared from this quarter?"

"Yes, sir. The sea is near, and one may easily hide in the ships in process of building."

"You are right. I understand now



the escapes the papers often speak about."

"Ah, sir, they give us a good deal of trouble, and we are always on the watch. Ah, I was not mistaken! There he is."

"Where?" said Cora, excitedly.

"Yonder, behind the keel of that inverted boat. He holds a mallet in his hand, and is driving a stake into the ground. If you wish to approach, madame——"

"Let us," said she.

"I remain here," said Victor; "I am tired."

Cora advanced a few steps in company with the guard, but suddenly stopped.

"What is the matter with her, pray?" said Mazilier, who followed her with his eye. "Has he already recognized her? and dares she not meet his eye? No, he turns his back to her and has not yet seen her. What is the matter with her?"

Curiosity got the better of fatigue, prudence, or pity, and he rejoined Cora.

"Well," said he, taking her aside, "do you feel any remorse?"

"I? No."

"Are you afraid?"

"Yes."

"That's it; the mallet he holds in his hand frightens you."

"Away, nonsense. Besides, is not the man armed who accompanies us? I fear something else."

"And what?"

She leaned towards Mazilier, and said,—

"He believes me, perhaps, cured of the wound he gave me, and thinks that I no longer suffer because of him, and that he is the only one to suffer, and this thought distresses him. I do not wish him to see me ugly and disfigured, he would be too happy."

"Oh, the women!" murmured Mazilier, raising his arms toward heaven.

He rejoined the guard and asked him

for some information, while Cora, who had seated herself on a pile of cordage, had her eyes fixed on George du Hamel.

The nature of his labor had made him turn round for a moment, so that Cora was able now to see his face and distinguish his features.

In her dreams she had often seen him, pale, disfigured, emaciated; in his eye and mouth were to be read anger, despair, and a thousand desires of vengeance. But her dreams had deceived her; she did not find him such as he had appeared to her.

The face of George had rather become brown than pale; it had become longer instead of being emaciated, and had acquired one distinction more. In consequence of the incessant labor to which he was devoted, his shoulders had grown broader, and his chest was better developed. Under his infamous livery, which fitted him so closely, the perfection of his personal form was exhibited to greater advantage. It was not anger and despair that one read in his face, but a sort of calm grief and melancholy resignation.

Suddenly he interrupted his labor, and, with one hand on his mallet and the other on his hip, he looked in the direction where Cora was.

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## VI.

ON seeing a well-dressed woman in this part of the arsenal, where he usually met only his companions in misfortune and his guardians, George du Hamel could not but experience an emotion of surprise.

At first he saw only in this person an object of diversion, a point on which to rest his eye, fatigued with monotonous perspective, a sort of relief to his *ennui*. Her elegant mantle, traveling-hat, and silk dress, which had suddenly struck his eye, operated on him like a charm. They



recalled the time when he was happy and free, and when everything smiled upon him. He contemplated the scene with delight, as one looks at a patch of blue sky on a sombre and cloudy day.

But this was only a sensation. A different feeling was to succeed it: that of his humiliation and shame.

Involuntarily, he lowered his eyes and surveyed his prison dress. The iron ring on his ankle imparted to him a sort of shudder, and he felt upon his head the cap of infamy.

Then, in order to escape the eyes which he felt were directed to him, he crouched behind the boat near which he was at work. He trembled from head to foot; a cold sweat ran from his forehead.

"Hallo, there! is that the way you work?" cried out a voice suddenly.

It was the guard, whose self-love induced him to show a little authority in the presence of the persons he was accompanying. Without hesitation and without reply George du Hamel rose and resumed his mallet.

"Come forward a little," said the guard; "they wish to see you."

"No, no," said Victor; "it is useless."

Cora said nothing. She was as pale as George du Hamel, and looked at him steadily.

With downcast eyes and mallet in hand, he advanced, in obedience to the orders of the officer.

This mallet intimidated young Mazilier, who had taken refuge at the side of the guard.

In proportion as George advanced a sort of metamorphosis took place in him. He appeared to suffer no longer from his abasement, but stood erect, as if he was proud of it, and as if he was conscious of his moral valor.

Soon he looked up, and his eye met that of Cora.

He stopped, and remained in her presence calm and silent, without giving any sign of new emotion. One might have thought that he did not recognize her.

She rose, walked toward him, and said,—

"I have wished to see you."

"I was expecting your visit," said he.

"Why?"

"You must be desirous of enjoying your vengeance."

"That is true."

"Do you enjoy it? Am I sufficiently miserable?"

"And do you enjoy *yours*? Am I sufficiently disfigured?"

"Ah!" said he, in a grave voice, "I repent of my fault; you will never repent of yours, and I pity you."

They looked at each other a moment in silence, which was broken by Cora.

"Can you still love me?" said she, suddenly.

"Oh no," he replied; "I know you."

"Do you wish me to obtain your pardon?"

"It has already been offered me, but I have refused it."

"Do you not suffer any?"

"My body suffers sometimes, but my heart was never happier."

"Then my vengeance is not complete."

"No."

"Adieu."

"Adieu."

He turned, and slowly regained the vessel near which he was at work.

Cora, after casting a last look at him, rejoined Victor Mazilier.

"What did he say to you?" asked Victor, drawing her a few steps away from the officer.

"He told me that he loved me still, and that he would be revenged on you after getting out of prison."

"Avenged on *me*! *Diable*! that alters my feeling towards *him*."

"Decidedly," said she. "I have been reflecting, and have come to the conclusion to authorize you to ask for his pardon."

"No, no. You are good and kind, very. But after this you will try perhaps to intimidate me, and prevent my taking any step in that direction."



"Ah," said she, "little do I care now whether he remains in prison or leaves it! He has managed to place himself above my vengeance; it will never reach him so long as he is in service here. You are at liberty, therefore, dear friend, to ask for his pardon if you wish."

"I give it up. With his prison dress and mallet, that man seems terrible."

Nothing retaining them any longer in the arsenal, they took leave of their guide and returned to their hotel.

Eight days after they were in Paris.

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## VII.

IN the autumn the regular guests of Cora reappeared in the small house in Neuilly Avenue.

All things were reduced to the accustomed order, and the year passed off as had the three years preceding.

In 186—, following the advice of Victor, Cora enlarged her premises. Her drawing-room having become too small to contain the company which met every evening, she was obliged to refuse all new-comers. In order to show herself more hospitable, she hired a small hotel situated by the side of the one she lived in, and with some alterations, made one house out of the two. This enlargement enabled her to give admission to some persons who had for a long time been applicants, among whom we ought to mention Monsieur De Brives and Monsieur De Mézin.

At this time the father of Marcelle had already been a widower for a long time, but had not yet withdrawn his daughter from the convent. His fortune, considerably diminished by frequent visits to the watering-places, and by unbridled gambling in the winter in different clubs, was not yet dissipated. There remained to him, on the one hand, a constant income, which helped him to keep his house on a good

footing; and on the other, the real estate in Léonia Street, which afterwards George Gérard and his mother were to live in. Notwithstanding these remains of a great fortune, he was not less often much embarrassed when he happened at the club to meet with some important loss. On several occasions he had not been able to satisfy his creditors within the set time; and had it not been for the kindness of Monsieur De Mézin, his colleague in the circle, who had advanced him important sums, he would have been under an obligation to resign his place.

This shows the necessity under which Monsieur De Brives was afterwards placed, of being as conciliating as possible when Monsieur De Mézin asked him for his daughter's hand. It shows also why he had been anxious to be received into Cora's establishment, where the relations among the gamblers were less rigid than in the circle, and where one enjoyed certain privileges very valuable to a man who could, the day after a great loss, no longer draw on his banker.

As to Monsieur De Mézin, he was nearly in the same situation as Monsieur De Brives, and made the same calculations as he. He found, besides, at Cora's, this valuable advantage to an aspirant for marriage, that his life as a gambler was more mysterious and more concealed than formerly.

Of an amiable and insinuating character, he managed in a short time to gain the good graces of Cora, and became not only one of the faithful of the evening reunions, but a friend of the house.

Two years and a half had elapsed since the visit of Victor Mazilier and Cora to the prison at Toulon. George du Hamel was about to finish his term of punishment.

On seeing the time approach when her ancient lover would be restored to liberty, Cora thought a good deal about what was going to become of him.

One day, being alone with one of her



friends who was represented as a distinguished lawyer, she thought she would utilize him by getting some instruction upon different points of law.

"Since my visit to Toulon," said she, "I have often asked myself what becomes of all those persons condemned to hard labor for five, ten, or twenty years, when they have served out their time. Do you know that it is very unpleasant to think that one is liable to meet them at any time?"

"Not in Paris, dear madame; a sojourn in our large cities is forbidden them."

"How! When they leave the prison are they not free?"

"They are not *absolutely* free. They undergo a new punishment, called the surveillance of the high police."

"The high police! What is the meaning of those words? I hear them pronounced for the first time."

"They should make no impression on your mind. Formerly they had a meaning, but no longer have any at the present time."

"But," said Cora, "if the surveillance is a punishment, as you say, why is it not pronounced in connection with the judgment rendered against the criminal? I was in attendance one day at a trial, which was ended by a condemnation to five years of hard labor, and no mention made of surveillance."

"Because surveillance was, in this case, the necessary accompaniment of the sentence pronounced. If I were not afraid of tiring you, dear madame, I would give you a history of this law of surveillance, which I made a particular study of when I had more leisure."

"At the time, you mean," said Cora, "when as yet you didn't play cards. I ask myself how a mind so serious as yours can love gambling."

"I have abandoned asking myself that question, as I am not able to solve it. But what consoles me a little is, that I meet in your house several persons at

least as serious as I. The wisest, you see, have their weakness, or folly."

"Well, my dear *fool*," said she, smiling, "give me the history you were speaking of, without fear of tiring me. We live in an epoch when *women* have need of instruction. I am a little weary, I confess to you, of frivolous conversation and reading. I have got so far along in my dislike of it, would you believe it? as to wish to find, even in a romance, something other than dialogues one after the other, other than recitals and action. I demand of an author to sustain and develop some social thesis, to combat some prejudice, and discuss some point of law if he finds occasion for it. Everybody does not think as I do, I know. Frivolous people are in the majority. They ask for facts upon facts, while they have a horror for analysis or discussion, and everything that resembles an idea. So much the worse for the frivolous. The author who respects himself does not write for them. Such is my profession of faith, dear sir and friend. I wait for yours on the surveillance of the *high police*."

"You encourage me so much, madame," said Monsieur X——, "that I should be guilty of bad grace if I waited to be urged any longer. But I give you notice that, if I am tiresome, you must blame yourself and not me. The measure called *surveillance of the high police*, and which succeeds the penalty and seizes the condemned at the very moment when his punishment is being finished, is a peculiar provision of the French law. It was not known in our ancient jurisprudence, and did not appear in the number of penalties announced by the penal code of 1791. We find the first traces of it in a decree of the year XIII. According to this decree, the liberated prisoners were bound to declare in what *commune* they wished to establish their residence. On arriving in this commune, they were subject to the surveillance of the local authority."

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## VIII.

CORA listened attentively to these explanations. They are interesting to every one; but for her whose conduct and depositions had sent George du Hamel to prison, they had a special interest.

The vengeance of Cora was now being completed, as she thought; but five years of hard labor for a man who could bear so courageously his forced labor at Toulon, and had called to his assistance resignation and philosophy, was a mere nothing.

She was much more to be pitied than he. *She* was condemned to physical deformity and loss of her beauty forever.

But at the moment he was on the point of being free, she learned suddenly that another punishment was to succeed the first, a punishment that would be lasting and terrible for a man of thirty, for whom life had still in reserve, perhaps, happy days and new enjoyments.

On leaving Toulon another residence was to be assigned him. He could not escape it. Everybody would know, not merely his past, not his crime, for public opinion might, perhaps, have acquitted him, but the new and infamous punishment which had been inflicted. When he should pass in the street, people would point him out as a man liberated from state prison. Decidedly she was well avenged.

She would sometimes ask herself if his punishment was in proportion to his fault. She became indulgent, and said to herself, it is punishing perhaps rather severely so handsome a young man, who has managed to remain even elegant in the livery of a criminal.

She saw George du Hamel at Toulon standing before her, proud of his infamy, arrogant in spite of his humiliation, and overwhelming her with his pity and contempt.

Ah! if he had always taken that stand; if instead of adoring and flattering her, he had resisted and checked her,

perhaps she would have conducted herself differently with him, and perhaps——

Suddenly a fear assailed her, and she turned to Monsieur De X—— and said,—

“If the person put under surveillance should refuse to submit to it, and should not go to the residence assigned him, what then?”

“The law, dear madame,” said Monsieur De X——, “has given a penal sanction to the measures of surveillance, and has made disobedience a special crime, which it designates by the name of *rupture de ban*. It would be tedious, madame, both for you and me, to go into the history of all the legislation connected with this subject. I will say, however, that recent legislation has shown itself much more humane in this matter, and seems substantially to say: society is strong enough to be content with defending itself. Under the pretext of protecting itself against future and uncertain dangers, it has not the right to make laws in some sort preventive, and to say to an unfortunate man who has just expiated his crime by a long detention, ‘Under the fear that you may relapse into the same errors, I condemn you to a new punishment, I treat you as if you were guilty. You are no longer a prisoner, granted; but I make you a slave for the rest of your life.’ When society says this, it is unjust and inhuman. I would rather it should incur some risk than be guilty of injustice.”

Monsieur De X—— ceased talking, and Cora thanked him kindly. Thanks to his explanations, the law on surveillance had no longer any mystery for her. As to George du Hamel, she was now settled in regard to his fate and all the eventualities that might occur in the future. Through curiosity, perhaps in consequence of another feeling, she was desirous of knowing what residence had been assigned him on leaving his place of confinement.

From calculations easy to make, the



expiration of his punishment had taken place during the last days of 1864; it was then 1865, and he must already have selected his domicile in some provincial city or town. One evening she said to Mazilier,—

“And that poor George du Hamel for whom you manifested so much pity, does he interest you no longer?”

“Zounds!” said he, “since you assured me that he was too much interested in me, the sympathy which he inspired has diminished.”

“What! do you still remember his threats? I am sure he has forgotten them. Having passed five years in prison, he will not be tempted to return to it. At all events, in your place, I should like to know where he lives, in order not to run the risk of encountering him.”

“Is he no longer in prison?”

“He must have left it six or eight months ago.”

“Ah, how fast time flies when one is busy! Well, where can he be? in Paris without any doubt. He will try to enjoy life, so as to make up for the beautiful years that he has lost.”

“There is where you are mistaken. Residence in Paris is forbidden to everybody of his class.”

“Indeed! Poor creatures! Where can they live, then? Would they send them to Carcassonne, for example? Ah, that would be terrible! I am not yet restored from my residence in that locality.”

“It would be interesting,” said Cora, “to know what residence has been assigned him.”

“How would that profit you?”

“I should not meet him.”

“That can be easily arranged. Let us never leave Paris.”

“It may happen that we may be obliged to travel, in which case it would be well to know where my enemy and yours is.”

“*Mine!* Yes, you are right; but how shall I know where he is?”

“You have friends in all directions,

among people at large and in the administration. Ask them to whom you must apply for information. I repeat to you that in your own interest I wish to be informed.”

“I am not to be duped by your solicitude for me, dear friend; it conceals a mystery. But a little prudence will do no harm. I will do what you desire.”

Three weeks after this conversation, Victor entered one day somewhat abruptly Cora’s room and said,—

“I have the information you wanted.”

“About what, or whom?”

“About George du Hamel.”

“Ah! and what is it?”

“It is not known what has become of him.”

“Do you call that information?”

“It is all I have been able to obtain.”

“You did not apply where you ought.”

“Beg pardon, I knocked at the prefecture of police, and at the office of the Minister of the Interior.”

“Did they tell you they didn’t know what had become of him?”

“Yes; the ministry inquired, and wrote, and telegraphed, and——”

“And?”

“The answer was that he was *en rupture de ban*; that is to say——”

“It is useless to explain, I know. What city or town had been designated or his residence?”

“A city in the centre of France; I don’t know what one.”

“Did he not appear there?”

“Never.”

“And they have lost track of him?”

“Entirely.”

“The police is very badly constituted,” said Cora.

“It is possible; but George du Hamel is more capable than I thought, and I give him all my sympathy.”

“Where do you think he is?” asked Cora.

“In Paris; I return to my first thought on the subject. Paris is the best place for concealment.”



"Would you know him if you met him?"

"I don't think I should. I have seen him only twice: in court six years ago, and in prison at Toulon for five minutes, and then his back was turned to me."

"If he is in Paris," said Cora, after a short silence, "I am sure of finding him."

"Bah! You never go out, and it is probable that he is not often in public."

"Chance," replied she, "will sooner or later bring about a meeting."

"So be it," said Victor Mazilier.

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## IX.

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It was at Baden, a few leagues from Lake Zurich, near the charming river Limmat, that George Gérard and his wife stopped, after spending in Italy the winter following their marriage.

Marcelle de Brives, for six months Madame Gérard, had proposed to her husband to return to France through Milan, Nice, and Marseilles, but George had dissuaded her from taking this route. Already, when the question was about going to Italy, he had refused to follow the course recommended by the Traveler's Guide, and had made a considerable détour in order to avoid the South of France, which he said he did not like.

But Marcelle had nothing to complain of for following the fancy of her husband. Never was a journey more charming. They ran over all Italy, sojourned at Florence, Rome, and Naples during the winter, and set out in the spring for Northern Italy and Switzerland. They were gradually by easy stages on their way back to France, when, at Geneva, George found a letter in the post-office from his mother.

"You are happy, you tell me, as you have never been before, my dear child,

That is one reason for keeping an incessant watch over your happiness. Italy and Switzerland have protected you till now, and have diverted you from every thought foreign to your love. Be not in haste to return to France. It is true that I long for the moment when I can throw myself into your arms, and snatch myself from your embrace only to press to my heart her whom you love and who makes you happy; but I am brave and can wait. Stay in the country where this letter shall find you. Remain there as long as possible. Of what use would it be to meet so soon face to face with each other? We cannot help speaking of a time which all our efforts ought to tend, on the contrary, to obliterate from our life. If I did not accompany you, if I deprived myself of the happiness of being a witness of your joys, was it not from the fear that my presence might recall to you remembrances which might trouble those joys? Follow my counsels, my well-beloved son, my dear convalescent. Have you not profited by them for the last three years? Have I not well ordered your life? The marriage which you ardently desired and which your loyalty prevented you from contracting, was it not I who wished for it, and who said to you, 'I take the whole upon myself and absolve you in advance from what may happen'? You owe me obedience because I am your mother, and because I have suffered through you. I order you to be happy. You are so. I wish that you may be always happy, and I repeat it, be not in haste to return."

After reading and meditating upon this letter, George easily persuaded Marcelle to pass the rest of the summer in Switzerland. They sought immediately an asylum where they might rest from their long journey. Chance led them to Baden, where they hired a small house on the bank of the river Limmat, and were perfectly happy. Ah, if Marcelle had written her life as formerly, what charming things she would have said, in what



eloquent language her heart would have spoken!

Out of that young girl, somewhat affected and not very reasonable of course, on leaving the convent, love had made an unpretending and thoughtful woman and wife. How readily, then, would she have discarded certain passages of her memoirs, in which there had at times escaped from her pen, still full of convent ink, ill-sounding expressions and pretentious phrases! But the happiness one feels is not easily described, and Marcelle thought no more about her journal.

Great changes were also observed in George. He was no longer that grave and taciturn young man whose description Marcelle had formerly given. He walked no more with bowed head and bended back. He seemed no longer absent-minded, restless, and absorbed by a fixed idea.

At thirty years of age he was again becoming gay, young, and ardent. One might have said that he was just entering upon a life which he loved, for the first time.

Summer was advancing, day followed day without anything disturbing the quietude of those two beings on whom everything in existence seemed to smile, and who lived in the present, forgetful of the past and without a care for the future.

One day, however, after some conversation of little importance, a cloud came suddenly across their clear blue sky.

Having been deprived for some time of any news from France, they had requested their landlord, who lived in a neighboring house, to procure them a French newspaper. He promised to do so, and handed to Marcelle, who was alone in the parlor at the time of his visit, a number of the *Journal des Débats*, received by a citizen of Baden.

Whilst George, who had retired to his room, was writing to his mother, Marcelle ran her eye over the journal; and when her husband rejoined her she presented it to him, saying,—

“Please look at this article on the third page.”

George read these words:

*Court of Cassation, Chambers united.*

*President Troplong in the chair.*

*Marriage contracted through mistake with a liberated convict.*

*Request that it be nullified.*

“It is curious, is it not?” said Marcelle, who could not account for the sudden impression produced upon George, whose face was entirely hidden by the paper before him.

He made no reply.

“What is the matter with you?” said she.

“Me? nothing,” said he.

He folded the paper and was going to put it in his pocket, when Marcelle exclaimed,—

“But I have not finished; I was scarcely beginning that article—— Oh, if you were accommodating, you would sit near me and read it to me. This trial interests me. Just think of it! A young woman who learns suddenly, after several years of marriage, that her husband is or has been a galley-slave. It is frightful! The details of this affair must be very curious, and I should like to know them. Come, don’t wait to be coaxed, come and sit by my side and read, unless you wish me to read it alone by myself.”

“No, no,” said he.

“That’s it; you prefer to suppress the tiresome passages in order to get through the sooner. That is your method. I thought when I got married that I had acquired the right to read everything. I was mistaken. My husband superintends my reading as formerly did Miss Dowson, and he is, alas! still more crabbed than she. This is being married with a vengeance.”

While using this last expression, she had risen and rejoined her husband. She threw her arm about his neck and drew him gently to the sofa, where she had previously been sitting.

When he was seated by her side, she



took the paper from his hands, unfolded it, presented it to him, and, with a bewitching smile, said,—

“Read, I beg of you.”

He read.

The *Journal des Débats* devoted its third page entirely to a summary of this affair, in which public opinion had taken a deep interest, and which had been brought successively before the Court of Paris, which sustained the marriage, the Court of Cassation, which pronounced it null and void, the Court of Orleans, which crushed the decree of the Court of Cassation, and finally the Court of Cassation, which rejected definitely the request that the marriage might be pronounced null and void.

An advocate of great talent, Monsieur Trouillebert, undertook the defense of a Monsieur B——, and maintained before the Imperial Court of Paris, and later before the Court of Orleans, that there was no reason for breaking a marriage contracted with a liberated galley-slave. It was his plea, in which, while developing with great ability the question of law, the most important one in this affair, he succeeded in exhibiting his eloquence and attracting the attention of Marcelle. She requested her husband to read to her the most important passages, and he obeyed.

With the help of Monsieur Trouillebert, George informed her what crime B—— had committed at the age of seventeen, that he was condemned to fifteen years of hard labor, and what was his conduct during his long confinement. When he had come to the passage concerning B——’s marriage, and the way in which it had been contracted, George wished to stop, but Marcelle insisted so hard that he was obliged to continue.

He resumed his reading:

“To Monsieur B——, said Monsieur Trouillebert, twenty-nine years of age, settled and industrious, it was quite natural, I do not say that he should think of marrying, but that others should think of

getting him married. His neighbors, who did not suspect the stigma that was upon him, proposed to him different matches, which he rejected. But they returned to the charge. They spoke to him of Mademoiselle X——, and Madame X——. They even went several times to his house. He still refused, until the day when, influenced by a feeling quite natural, or by an illusion, if you prefer it, he gave himself up to dreams of happiness and love, which should have been forever forbidden him.

“During the first part of November, 1856, he wrote to the widow X—— a letter, in which he asked of her the hand of her daughter. The marriage took place. But it should be known that Monsieur B—— did nothing either to hinder these ladies from informing themselves, or for hastening the fulfillment of the marriage, and thereby precipitating them into the miscalculation they now complain of.

“In fact, during these four months of parleying, B——, troubled as by a presentiment, which, though unknown to himself, was nothing but the trouble of his conscience, had several times hesitations which might and ought to bring about a rupture of engagement. So once he suddenly discontinues his visits, and receives from widow X—— a letter asking for a conference. Another time, later, the day of marriage approaches, and the ceremony is fixed for the 23d of February. Letters of invitation are sent out. Monsieur B——, under some pretext, fails to be present. They supplicate him again, and the ceremony is definitely fixed for the 11th of March.

“Surely, gentlemen, it had been better to listen to the presentiment which troubled him.

“Scarcely was he married, when a man whom he knew in prison threatens to reveal everything to his wife if he does not satisfy his demand for money; and as he wishes to avoid these exigencies, he reveals too tardily, alas! for all concerned, the fatal truth.



"Such were, gentlemen, since he left the prison, the life of Monsieur B——, and the facts which preceded the marriage.

"But his silence, and the secret which he kept!

"That is true, it is horrible! There cannot be, in honest minds, two opinions in the matter.

"Yes, I am one of those who think that he who is seeking for a young person in marriage ought himself to reveal to the family of the latter what he is, and what he has been, were he, if he has anything to keep back, to condemn himself by giving up the happiness which he had dreamed of. But these conscientious scruples, without which one is never, I will not say an honest man, but a good man, cannot and should not be interfered with by the legislator. The moral law alone can penetrate the depths of the conscience, and it is in this that the honesty which has such scruples is superior to that which appeals only to written laws."

George's voice appeared tired and changed, and so he stopped reading.

Marcelle said to him,—

"That pleading is very fine; while defending the case of his client, B——'s advocate judges his conduct and condemns it."

"So," said George, after a moment's silence, "there is no indulgence in your heart for that unfortunate man?"

"All the indulgence that I might have felt for the man of whom you speak disappears from the moment that he had not the courage to avow his position. I am of the same opinion as his attorney. One has no right to deceive her whom he marries, who confides to him her destiny, and who is to bear his name."

"If he had told the truth," said George, "the marriage would not have taken place."

"And what of that? he would have done his duty."

"And suppose that he loved her?"

"He should have sacrificed his love."

"And if he was loved by her?" added George.

"One of two things," responded Marcelle: "either on learning the past of him whom she was going to marry, she ceased to love him and was no longer to be pitied; or her love resisted the unforeseen blow, and she had no longer any reproaches to make. She accepted the destiny of her husband, and bore with him all the consequences of his conduct."

"Your reasoning is good," said he; "and yet one might easily reply to what you have said. There are often fatal circumstances, absolute impossibilities, in the way of avowing the truth. The very existence of two persons may sometimes be at stake. In order to pass an infallible judgment, one must be enlightened upon many details and numerous particularities. Can one ever read to the very bottom of people's conscience?"

After a moment's silence he continued,—

"Then you admit that love may resist a confidence like that of which we are speaking?"

She reflected and answered,—

"Yes, I admit it, if the crime was not so odious that it must excite lasting indignation, if the expiation has been complete and the repentance sincere."

It was easy to see that this conversation had made an impression upon George. For two or three days he felt it, and his moodiness of bygone time returned upon him. But he could not resist the good humor and charming gayety of Marcelle. Soon she regained all her influence over him, and he thought only on loving her.

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## X.

AUTUMN had succeeded the summer, and they were so perfectly happy in their little Baden hermitage, that they thought



not of leaving it. But two letters suddenly came which induced them to depart.

The first was from Miss Dowson, calling upon them for assistance; saying, if they did not come, she would be obliged to quit the house in Léonia Street, where she had seen the mother of Marcelle, her best and only friend, breathe her last.

Her position, said she, was no longer endurable. Under the pretext that he had become a single man, that his daughter no longer lived in the house, and would go, on her return, to occupy the pavilion at the end of the court with her husband, Monsieur De Brives, said Miss Dowson, was in the habit of receiving company of the most *shocking* character. That was the expression she used and was in the habit of using; the poor, dear woman knew no other for expressing her opinion.

So long as Monsieur De Brives was satisfied with returning home every morning at five or six o'clock, she said nothing. That was none of her business. But now he remained at home sometimes, received his friends, and gave a gambling-party.

"Yes, he dares," exclaimed the indignant Miss Dowson,—“he dares to give a gambling-party in the very drawing-room where Madame De Brives used to sit so often, and which was recently animated by the presence of Marcelle! If he would receive only his friends! but,—ah! I hardly dare say it, I am so *shocked*,—at his last soirée I saw, yes, with my own eyes, I saw a woman, with her veil on, alight from a carriage and enter our house. A woman, gracious goodness! in company with all those men! ah! *shocking, very shocking!*”

George and Marcelle did not seem to be so much *shocked* as Miss Dowson at the conduct of Monsieur De Brives. His passion for gambling was well known to them, and they had often deplored it; but it no longer affected them as formerly, as they had come to the conclusion it was of

no use to trouble themselves about it. As to showing hospitality to his friends, for a single time, perhaps, instead of going to their houses, there was no harm in that. Gamblers are not a noisy class, who carry disorder into a house and disturb the neighbors. They whom Monsieur De Brives admitted to his house were unquestionably persons of respectability. But there was the *veiled* woman. She *might* be a *woman of the world*. In our day these women allow themselves so many eccentricities! At all events, Monsieur De Brives was a widower, and it could not be regarded as criminal in him to receive, before witnesses, a visit more or less mysterious, during the absence of his daughter.

"I am decidedly of opinion," said Marcelle, "that the scruples of Miss Dowson, respectable as they are, should not hasten our return to Paris. I think it necessary only in one point of view: my father has still, perhaps, some debts which trouble him; and I should like to place at his disposal, as I promised him, that part of my dowry which you were so kind as to abandon to me, my dear George."

"No," said he, smiling.

"How is that?"

"I consented to make this sacrifice, only on condition it should be complete."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that I never want to hear your dowry spoken of; I mean that my little fortune would be sufficient for us, and that your father should dispose, not of the whole capital, but of the half of that capital. The other half shall be converted into income coupons, which he shall not sell, but from which he shall receive a revenue."

"Can I accept the proposition?" said she.

"You ought to."

"Are you in earnest?"

"It would grieve me if you should not."

"Then I hesitate no longer," replied she, rushing into his arms. "I am happy



to hold everything from you. Now it remains only to persuade my father to accept the proposal. He will be more difficult to deal with than I have been. But with proper delicacy and perseverance we shall succeed. I rely upon you to second me, my dear husband."

The second letter was calculated to make a greater impression on their minds and influence them to return immediately to France. It was from Monsieur De Brives. He told them that he thought Madame Gérard a sick woman. She kept herself out of his sight when he called to see her, doubtless that he might not recall his children and disturb their happiness. But he was persuaded that her condition, without being alarming, demanded attentions that George and Marcelle could alone administer.

They left Baden in the first part of October, during a beautiful sunset, often turning round to view for the last time the house where they had been so happy. And when it had entirely disappeared and they heard no longer the tumultuous waves of the river Limmat, a sort of indefinite sadness took possession of them.

For a moment they asked themselves in secret, without daring to impart their thoughts to each other, if they were not leaving in that dear country the best part of themselves,—if their happiness could be as complete as it had been,—if it were not going to vanish, as vanished in the horizon, behind the tall pine woods, the last rays of the sun.

But they looked at each other, smiled, and soon banished these sad thoughts from their minds.

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## XI.

THEY congratulated themselves upon their return. Madame Gérard *was* suffering, as Monsieur De Brives had informed them. But the return of George and Marcelle, the care with which they sur-

rounded her, the joy she felt on seeing her son happy and without fears in regard to the future, soon restored her to health.

During the absence of her children, and in anticipation of their return, she had taken pleasure in preparing for them an apartment in the pavilion which she occupied.

"You will be so well pleased at home," said she to her son, "that you will never wish to go out."

"If that depended on me, dear mother, I should not often be seen in Paris. Between you and Marcelle, in the charming paradise you have made for us, I should be the happiest of men. But if my wife wishes to take a walk, or to go to the theatre, what can I say?"

"I don't know; but I beg of you to avoid showing yourself in public as much as possible."

"You are always troubled with fears."

"If I were entirely without them I should be the happiest of women."

"During my journey abroad you had nothing to fear, and yet you were sick."

"I had not seen you for so long!" said she, embracing him. "Dear child, I live only through you and for you."

"Dear mother, you love me in proportion to what I have made you suffer."

"No, no, let us talk no more of my sufferings. I have forgotten them."

Still troubled by the same thought, after a moment's silence she continued,—

"Next spring it will be necessary to start again for some retired, unknown, distant, very distant country outside of France. But this time I shall accompany you both, and we will arrange no more to return. Are you willing?"

"Am I willing?"

"Very well. Be prudent during the winter; I ask it of you as a favor; and especially do not be troubled too much on account of my fears. I rejoice so much to see that you think no more of the past."

"Ah!" said he, "how *could* I think of it? The present is so charming, and the future so lavish of its promises."



## XII.

THE veiled woman, whose presence at Monsieur De Brives had so much offended Miss Dowson, was no other than Cora. For two years her intimacy with Monsieur De Mézin had increased. These two natures were in sympathy. Cora took pleasure in rendering to her guest a thousand little services, valuable to an unmarried man, who lived alone and had no family.

By way of requital, Monsieur De Mézin used to visit her frequently in the daytime, when Victor Mazilier, after his laborious nights, as he called them, was indulging in a recuperative sleep. He did not fear to take a walk with her sometimes, and to send her his carriage, in which he took a seat by her side. But she was especially flattered by the pains he took to make her believe that her scars were scarcely visible, and that, at all events, she was so beautiful that she could dispense with being pretty.

In order to please and thank her for her attentions, he had recourse, very nearly, to the seductive language formerly employed by Victor, and now neglected by the latter, who was beginning to be tired of her whose fortune he had made, and who had contributed to his.

Monsieur De Mézin was perhaps sincere in complimenting Cora. Physically, she was more accomplished than she had ever been. The nine years which had elapsed since her arrival in France had, in some way, completed and rendered her perfect. Her shoulders, arms, waist, and figure generally were more admirable than ever, and she might have served as a model for a sculptor.

One day he took her to the races. Cora, who, for good reasons, did not like to appear in broad daylight, had never attended this kind of show. Covered with a thick veil, and sitting in the back part of De Mézin's carriage, she took great pleasure in seeing without being seen. She wished to have a taste of the pleasures connected with the turf, and to

enjoy the emotions of a bet. Monsieur De Mézin bet on a favorite horse; she took the field against him and won. When, on their return, he was desirous of paying what he had lost, she said to him,—

"I am a little tired of passing all my evenings at home, and of receiving every day without being received. I ask in payment of what you have lost, that you organize a party at your house, to which all our friends shall be invited."

"I see in your suggestion but one difficulty," replied Monsieur De Mézin: "my apartment is one of the smallest, and our friends will never find room enough in it."

"We will not invite everybody."

"You will thereby make enemies, and I would not advise it. I——"

"Pardon me, you have no voice in the matter; you are at my discretion."

"I do not refuse to give the party, but I propose that it be at Provençaux."

"No, no; it would no longer have the character of intimacy. Try again."

"I have got it," said he, suddenly.

"What?"

"I invite you to pass the evening at Monsieur De Brives's. His daughter is on a journey, he lives alone, is admirably well situated, and will not refuse to lend me his apartment, especially when he learns that the object is to pay you a compliment."

"That is understood then," said Cora. "Fix the day, and above all, don't forget that gambling debts are to be paid within twenty-four hours. If you are embarrassed, I will give you a week. That is all I can do for you."

It was after this conversation that Miss Dowson saw, one evening, a veiled woman in Monsieur De Brives's drawing-room, and wrote to George and Marcelle that there was trouble brewing.



## XIII.

THIS party, which was very well organized, and ended with one of the most cheerful suppers imaginable, made upon Cora an excellent impression.

A single glance of the eye was sufficient for her, when she entered Monsieur De Brives's house, to discover that a wife had presided over the arrangement of his dwelling, and that if he was unmarried he had not always been so.

This apartment was, so to speak, still impregnated with the presence of Madame De Brives and her daughter. They had given it their seal,—they had left in every part of it the impress of their sojourn,—they had diffused over it and through it a perfume of grace and honor.

These details, not appreciable by all persons, could not escape Cora; they excited her interest, her curiosity, and procured for her new sensations.

Was it not the first time in her life, perhaps, that she enjoyed the pleasure of penetrating the interior existence of fashionable women, of accounting for their habits, and of being in indirect contact with them? She felt the emotions experienced by an honorable woman, though in a contrary sense, whom chance, or curiosity, may take into the apartment inhabited by a woman of an opposite character. Everything astonishes, interests, and excites her; she has blushes and shudders which she cannot explain. She would flee, but cannot decide to do it.

Three or four months after this party, Cora manifested a desire that a new one should be given her, and applied to her friend Monsieur De Mézin.

"When will you offer me," said she, "an opportunity to win another bet?"

"When you please. Put me down already your debtor, and give your orders."

"They shall have nothing terrible in them. I ask for a second edition of the party that took place at the house of Monsieur De Brives."

"But it cannot again take place at his house, my dear friend."

"Why, pray?"

"His daughter has returned."

"Ah! she comes to live with her father?"

"No; she is married, and the apartment of Monsieur De Brives is not large enough for the young household."

"Then what?"

"She inhabits the same premises, and Monsieur De Brives worships his family, or rather, he has a perfect adoration for his daughter."

"Is she pretty?"

"More than pretty, she is charming! well proportioned every way, with the feet and hands of a child, like——"

"Her face is not like mine, fortunately for her."

"No accident has happened to her, I acknowledge."

"Finish her portrait. Of what color are her eyes?"

"Blue."

"She holds them always cast down, probably."

"She has an assured, frank, and honest look."

"Has she a small mouth?"

"Neither small nor large. She has vermilion lips and perfectly white and regular teeth."

"How does she dress?"

"With great simplicity. She follows the fashion only approximately, just enough not to appear odd or ridiculous."

"I should like to get a glimpse of that marvel. Where is she to be met with? Does she go to the races or the theatre?"

"Never. I offered a box yesterday to Monsieur De Brives for the Italian theatre; but after consulting his daughter he refused it. She prefers, it seems, to pass her evenings at home."

"With her husband?"

"Probably."

"Is it a love match?"

"They say so."

"What is her husband's name?"



"George Gérard."

"Hold!" said Cora.

"Do you know him?"

"Not at all. It was the little name George, which I was not expecting, that occasioned my surprise. Is this husband so charming that Madame Gérard refuses a box at the Italians in order to pass her evenings with him? Is he young?"

"Thirty to thirty-five."

"Handsome?"

"Yes; good looking, tall, strong, and well built."

"A fine head?"

"An expressive head with very handsome eyes."

"Is he rich?"

"He is said to be in easy circumstances."

"What does he do?"

"Nothing, I believe. He led, before marriage, a very retired life, and almost mysterious."

"Ah!"

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing. I am foolish. How did Mademoiselle De Brives become acquainted with him, if he lived so retired?"

"He lived with his mother on the same premises."

"With his mother, do you say?"

"Yes. What is there astonishing in that? More than one son before his marriage lives with his mother."

"No doubt; but you misunderstood the meaning of my interruption. Go on, my dear friend. Your young man lived, then, in the house of Mademoiselle De Brives? He saw her from his window, and, as in novels, fell in love with her."

"If I understood rightly certain phrases that escaped formerly from Monsieur De Brives, and from a physician of our friend, Paul Combes, it was Mademoiselle De Brives who fell in love first."

"Just think of that! those discreet and prudent young girls!"

"They have a heart like others. It is

a beating heart; but they know when and how to control its throbs."

"They must be guessed at, then; and it seems that Gérard did so?"

"Rather tardily, it appears. I thought at the time that he was not very desirous of getting married. He made many objections to it. In fine, the marriage was for a long time put off."

"If Mademoiselle De Brives was in love, *he* was not."

"At all events, I can assure you that he is now. I met him day before yesterday at Monsieur De Brives, on a visit with his wife, and was struck with the change that has taken place within a year. I had seen him two or three times before his marriage, when he appeared melancholy, dejected, and restless."

"Ah! he looked restless?"

"He is now cheerful, and full of good humor. Yes, he has the appearance of being really in love."

"Enough so to make others think of being so, eh, my dear De Mézin? Why are you not?"

"But, my dear Cora——"

"Yes, yes, I know," said she, interrupting him, "you are going to tell me that you are in love with me. It is of no use, I don't believe you. It would not be natural. But, being received as you were, at all hours, at Monsieur De Brives's, and on good terms with his daughter, whose good qualities you perfectly appreciated, I am astonished that you——"

"That *I* didn't love her. How do you know but I did?"

"*Did* you though, truly?"

"*Mon Dieu!* yes, I may as well tell *you* my secrets; I asked for Mademoiselle De Brives in marriage."

"Ah! and she did not consent?"

"You see how it is."

"What motive had she for refusing?"

"She accused me of being a gambler."

"That young girl is very intelligent. But how has she such an aversion to gambling? Generally, at her age, people do not know the evils of this passion."



"You forget that her father is as much of a gambler as I, if not more so; and that Madame De Brives has suffered a great deal from the neglect consequent upon her husband's entire devotion to this little vice."

"I understand it. The mother has been talking to the daughter; and the latter, having learned your character, has rejected your offer. Poor De Mézin! I pity you, if the young girl is as captivating as you represent her. You have inspired me with a desire of seeing this interesting couple. I must consider what is best to do."

#### XIV.

THE conversation she had just had with De Mézin made at first a certain impression upon Cora. The name George, the description which seemed to accord with that of George du Hamel, the mysterious, retired life, and a thousand other details, returned incessantly to her mind, and plunged her into endless reveries.

By degrees, however, this impression disappeared. Was it admissible that George Gérard was no other than George du Hamel? Could Mademoiselle De Brives have married a liberated convict? And would that man, liable to be arrested and returned to prison, because he had broken his pledge to government and was under surveillance, would he have dared to come to live in Paris?

She was evidently the plaything of her too vivid imagination. Her desire to find George again, and the hatred that he inspired, prepared her to see him everywhere, and she became ridiculous by dint of being suspicious.

When she was alone with Victor Mazilier, the next day after De Mézin's visit, she was the first to laugh at herself.

"Would you imagine," said she, "that

I imagined I was on the track of your enemy?"

"What enemy?"

"Your liberated galley-slave."

"Ah, yes; I had forgotten him, the brave fellow! Have you met him? is he getting on well?"

"You are a fool, or crazy. If I *had* met him, do you suppose I should talk with you so calmly?"

"Why not? He has become quite indifferent to me. That is an old story, my dear. Just think, it is nearly nine years old."

"It seems to me that it is but of yesterday."

"That is your way of rejuvenating."

"Oh, I am not along far enough to need that process yet."

"But we are growing old, my beautiful friend. I have just reached my thirty-three years, and that begins to tell. And just think of it, my father is still waiting for me at Havre in his office. I propose to go and see him one of these days, the poor, dear man. The love of my family has been uppermost in me for some time. The moment has perhaps come for me to repose in its bosom."

"Yes, I perceive the change which has taken place in you."

"No feeling is eternal in this world, my dear friend."

"I beg your pardon, I know of one."

"Ah, yes: that which you feel for your galley-slave. Well, you said you thought you were upon his track."

"Yes, for a moment. But I very soon discovered my error. I thought I had found him in the son-in-law of Monsieur De Brives."

"In the son-in-law of—— Ah! she is a very worthy young woman. But how could dear Monsieur De Brives, who is so proud of his birth and his name, think of giving his daughter to a—— I shall laugh about it as long as I live."

"I do not say that it is so."

"It is a pity, it is really a pity! What made you think that might be so?"



"A description given me of Mademoiselle De Brives's husband, which resembled very closely that of George du Hamel."

"Well, perhaps it *is* he. Had I not told you that he would come to live in Paris? I was sure of it. Paris, you understand, is like an old mistress, one does not know how to leave her. What more natural than that George du Hamel, living in Paris, should fall in love with a marriageable young woman? He probably concealed his past life, deceived the family, and——this bit of romance pleases me hugely; I am delighted with it."

"It is only a romance," said Cora.

"Oh, in our day," replied Victor, "romances are histories. If I were in your place, I would not remain a moment in doubt. I would know this very day what to depend upon. Ah, that dear De Brives!"

"It is all folly, nonsense, I tell you! and I am sorry to have had you share my ridiculous ideas. At all events, not a word of all this; you understand?"

"Of course not. I am not desirous of learning how well De Brives can handle a sword. One is not safe when he meddles with family matters. And besides, dear friend, I thought I had proved to you how well I could keep a secret."

"Well, I beg your pardon."

Cora had thought that Victor Mazilier ridiculed the suspicions that had crossed her mind, but, on the contrary, he shared them with her. He went even farther than she. He admitted as probable that George du Hamel and George Gérard were one and the same person, and advised her to make sure of it. Why should she remain any longer in a state of incertitude when it was so easy to know the truth?

In spite of his retired life, George Gérard must go out from time to time. What more simple than to stop in a carriage before his residence, and to wait for him on his passage? Was she not quite sure of recognizing him? Ah, she had not forgotten his features, so clearly de-

fined. She had him constantly before her as he appeared at Toulon in his prison-dress and with the mallet in his hand. His calm and firm attitude, his haughty look and brief speech, had been engraved in her mind and could not be effaced.

In spite of the change that must have been effected in the person of George, and the new clothes he might have on, would not a glance of her eye be sufficient to enable her to say, it is he! it is he?

She rang for her chambermaid, had brought her what was necessary in order to go out, and ordered a carriage.

In passing from the Neuilly Avenue to Léonia Street, all her doubts returned.

"What I am going to do is absurd," said she to herself; "for I am going to wait in the street, in a carriage, like a police agent, a jealous husband, or a woman in love. And to wait for whom? For an unknown man, when it is a hundred to one that he does not resemble in the least him whom I am in pursuit of. To wait for him all day perhaps without his coming out."

All at once she said to herself,—

"Why should I not go to Monsieur De Brives's? My visit is a very natural one. I could say I was passing before his door and wished to shake hands with him. I didn't know his daughter had returned; and in any case, a man, whatever be his position, may receive in open day a woman of becoming external appearance."

Soon the carriage stopped in Léonia Street. Cora had pointed out to her the story occupied by Monsieur De Brives, and rang at his door.

"Monsieur has gone out," said the servant who answered the bell.

"If madame wishes to see Miss Dowson——"

"It is of no consequence," replied Cora, without thinking of the anger she might have aroused had she accepted the invitation of the domestic. "At what o'clock do you think Monsieur De Brives will return?"

"Monsieur will not be gone long. He



went out a few minutes with his son-in-law and his daughter."

"I will call again," said she as she went away. She entered her carriage and ordered the coachman to stop at the corner of Léonia Street and Caillard.

From this point she could not fail of seeing return those whom she was waiting for.

The young man who accompanied Monsieur De Brives and daughter was of course George Gérard, since, as the domestic said, he went out with them.

About fifty minutes elapsed, when, about five in the afternoon, three persons appeared at the corner of Léonia Street. The first was Monsieur De Brives, who had on his arm a very beautiful woman who was evidently his daughter.

Cora's eyes were immediately turned towards the third person, who was walking by the side of the young woman and at this moment talking with her. He was a man of about thirty-five years of age, plainly but elegantly dressed, with a distinguished air and a most intelligent countenance.

But it was not George du Hamel.

## XV.

THUS Cora had been mistaken, and in a moment her suspicions had vanished. There was no resemblance between George Gérard and George du Hamel?

She gave orders to her coachman to return to Neuilly Avenue.

On her way she reproached herself for having paid any regard to the remarks of Victor Mazilier. The intelligence of her old adviser was visibly diminishing. Gambling had taken away a part of his faculties. She found in him no longer the qualities which had formerly attracted her. He had become stupid morally and physically.

How could he ever have pleased her,

and how could she prefer him to George du Hamel?

She took pleasure in placing them both before her for a picture. The one was short, plump, and of a sickly paleness; the other tall, but not too tall, sinewy, and pale, after the oriental style. Sleepless nights at a gambler's table had changed the features of the one, by reddening his eyes, removing his hair, and bloating his face. A regular life had perfected the beauty of the other, and given to his eyes greater clearness, and to his features more of the noble.

Having analyzed them physically, she compared them morally. In the one was a conventional spirit, drawn from all sources, such as cunning, audacity, and the like; in the other, a regular education and superior intellect. The one cunning and cowardly, seeking protection from the guard in their visit to Toulon; the other, resolute, brave even to rashness on a thousand occasions, and at the time of his duel at New Orleans with John de B—. On the one hand a *petit monsieur*, on the other a man.

After indulging in this analysis and astonishing herself with her retrospective preferences for him whom she had formerly misunderstood and abused, she reviewed in thought that charming young woman who had passed before her, giving her arm to Monsieur De Brives. There you see what they call a fashionable and honorable woman. She could go out in open day, escorted by her husband and father, saluted respectfully by all who knew her, simple in her dress and manners, worthy, happy, and smiling.

"What a distance separates me from that woman!" said she. "I fled from New Orleans through self-love and pride, because there was too broad a line of demarkation between white and colored women. Ah! there is in Europe a much greater one between some women and others."

She could not help envying also the beauty, gracefulness, and exquisite distinction of Madame Gérard. A glance was



sufficient to enable her to account for all her physical qualities, and to admire those vermilion lips, that perfect nose, those large blue eyes, deep and mild, beneath black eyebrows, which imparted to her face an originality and extraordinary charm.

And, as she had just been comparing Victor Mazilier with George du Hamel, she now compared herself with the daughter of Monsieur De Brives. People would stop to contemplate the one, but would turn aside in order not to look at the other.

Nevertheless, she herself *had* been handsome, and it required only a fit of anger and a pistol-shot—— At this moment she detested more thoroughly than ever George du Hamel, and it was fortunate for him that he was not the husband of that beautiful wife.

"Ah!" said she to herself, "if my suspicions instead of vanishing had been strengthened, if I had recognized him by her side, how I could have avenged myself!"

Gently rocked by her carriage, she was voluptuously enjoying her fancied revenge, when she was awakened to reality by the carriage suddenly stopping at the Hôtel Neuilly.

In the evening, when her regular guests arrived, she had recovered her self-possession, and did the honors of her drawing-room with her usual grace.

Towards midnight, or a little past, Monsieur De Brives made her a call.

"You come late this evening," said she.

"I have been acting as father of the family," replied he, with a smile, "and have taken my daughter and son-in-law to the French theatre."

After this explanation, as he was looking around for a seat at the gambling-table, she retained him by these words,—

"Have you not been a little puzzled to-day?"

"By whom?"

"You didn't ask who that veiled, mys-

terious lady was, who rang at your door during your absence, and refused to tell her name?"

"Was that you?"

"It was I myself. You had not guessed?"

"Not at all. I confess, indeed, that I was a little puzzled for a moment. Was it really you? I am very sorry, then, that I was not at home. Had you anything to tell me?"

"A small favor to ask of you."

"Speak, dear friend," said De Brives, taking a seat by the side of Cora.

"It is too late," said she; "I could not wait, and the favor has been rendered. It shall be for another time."

"From this time," replied Monsieur De Brives, gallantly, "I will not leave my house, for fear of being absent when you call."

"Then," said she, smiling, "I have been guilty of no indiscretion in venturing to call on you?"

"Not the least in the world. How could you?"

"I learn through Monsieur De Mézin that your daughter has returned."

"My daughter does not live with me; besides, my dear friend, I am of an age to receive whom I please. Alas——"

"But I am inexcusable."

"How so?"

"Would you believe that I was crossing the threshold of your door to enter my carriage when I saw you returning?"

"And you did not wait for me?"

"You were not alone; you had your daughter on your arm, and I did not dare. By the way, my friend, I must compliment you. I understand that you adore her. She is charming!"

"Isn't she?"

"And so is her husband!"

"Did you see him?"

"Of course; wasn't he walking by her side?"

"Oh, that was not he."

"Do you say——"

"I say that my son-in-law did not ac-



company us when we returned; it was one of our friends, a tenant of mine, Doctor Combes, whom you know by name."

"Ah! It was Doctor Combes."

"I had gone out with Gérard and my daughter to see some horses for sale in Pigalle Street, and on returning we met the doctor at the corner of Léonia Street. He told us he had just received a box for the French theatre and that he should be put out with us if we didn't accept it. We did accept, and while returning with Combes, my son-in-law left us for a moment to read some posters on Bruyère Street. It was thus, my dear friend, that you were permitted to contemplate the features of that dear doctor instead of the face of my son-in-law."

"The whole is explained," said Cora, having become absent-minded for a moment. And as Monsieur De Brives could not stop any longer, and was taking leave of her to join the gamblers, she said,—

"I have been thinking. It is possible that I may have recourse to you for the service in question. If I decide, at what o'clock shall I find you to-morrow?"

"I told you I should not go out any more," said he.

## XVI.

THE next day, at two in the afternoon, Cora presented herself at Monsieur De Brives's. She was immediately introduced into his office. After talking with him about the service or favor she expected from him,—for she had been obliged to find a pretext for explaining her visit announced the night before—she said, on rising,—

"Do you know, my dear De Brives, that your house makes a splendid appearance? I understand why you have not been willing to come and reside in my direction. How much does it bring you in?"

"Some twenty thousand francs."

"Is that all?"

"I have very few tenants. The rents of Doctor Combes and Madame Gérard are the most considerable."

"Madame Gérard? Is she not the mother of your son-in-law?"

"Yes."

"She inhabits the little pavilion at the end of the court, which appeared to me so delightful. It is a real retreat, and one might there think he was in the country."

"It lacks only cows," said De Brives, smiling.

"It is easy to supply them," said Cora.

"Where, pray, did you find those gigantic ivies which cover the walls, and also those rare plants? I am in pursuit of some for my little hotel at Neuilly."

"My son-in-law only can inform you. It was he who superintended all this arrangement."

"But he is never seen; how, then, can I apply to him? According to what I hear, he is a veritable savage."

"He is somewhat so, or has been; but now he is simply a happy man."

"Indeed! Are there any happy people, *entirely* happy? I would like to touch the hem of their garment. That must bring happiness."

"I cannot," said De Brives, "cry out of this window to my son-in-law and say, 'Cross over the court and come to my house. I am here with a lady who would like to touch the hem of your garment.' But if you think, my dear Cora, that a glance thrown upon that man may render fortune favorable to you, let us pass into my smoking-room. It gives a view of the court, and you can at your leisure contemplate the little pavilion, the object of your admiration, and probably him who inhabits it."

"Let us go into the smoking-room. But pray give me an opera-glass, for here, as in an imperial museum, one is permitted to look and forbidden to touch."

In order to reach the smoking-room



they had to pass through the anteroom, where they fell in with Miss Dowson. Upon seeing Cora, the dear woman drew back affrighted.

"Who is that woman we have just met?" asked Cora, when she was installed in the smoking-room upon a sofa.

"An excellent woman, who was the lady companion of Madame De Brives, and afterwards instructress of my daughter."

"She terrified me. I thought she wanted to exorcise me."

"She thought of it perhaps," said De Brives, with a smile. "She does not allow me to receive at my own house any but my daughter, son-in-law, and his mother."

"Then, my dear friend, hide me quick; you will offend her if she sees me appear at the window. Please shut this blind, and I shall not be seen from your son-in-law's. Hand me also an opera-glass, that I may contemplate the happy man, his ivy and rare plants."

"The happy man," said Monsieur De Brives, handing to Cora his opera-glass, "seems to be sitting there in his library. Do you not see him?"

"Nearly."

"You will see him better when he turns his head towards his favorite flowers, and it will not be long first, for he loves to see them grow. Look, what did I tell you? Now you can see him as plainly as I see you."

"Exactly," said Cora.

"What is the matter," asked De Brives, "your glass shakes as if your hand trembled? Are you cold? Will you have a fire?"

"Not necessary," said she; "I was a little cold, but I will return home on foot, and that will warm me."

"You have not told me how you like the looks of my son-in-law?"

"Very well. So well that I should be delighted to be better acquainted. Pray take him to my house with you one of these days."

"Him to your house, my dear friend?

to a house where gambling is so much in favor? He shares my daughter's ideas on gambling. He detests it."

"Bah! I will take it upon myself to make him love it."

"I defy you to do it; I would rather not though, for fear you might accept my challenge. One gambler is quite enough in our family."

They exchanged a few more phrases, and Cora retired.

She returned on foot from Léonia Street to Neuilly, without entering the heart of Paris, preferring the least frequented streets and the most deserted boulevards. She walked with a rapid, agitated, and feverish step. Some persons turned and looked at her with curiosity. She kept talking aloud to herself, without minding or perceiving that any one was looking at her.

On arriving at Neuilly Avenue, she went up to her room and locked the door.

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## XVII.

WHEN Cora caught a glimpse of George Gérard, he was sitting in his library before a glass door that opened on a level into his garden, with a book in his hand.

A moment after he laid his book aside, rose and exchanged some words with his wife, who was embroidering in a neighboring room, and going up one story, rejoined his mother.

"You don't come down with us," said George. "Are you offended with me?"

"No, my dear child, but I am very sorry for your imprudence of yesterday. Allow me time to recover."

"Dear mother," said he, taking his seat by the side of her and her hands in his, "you are really unreasonable. Can I refuse my wife every kind of amusement? She does not ask for any, the dear child, I know; but at her age do you think that she has no desire of amuse-



ment, of seeing what everybody sees, and of living as others live? Yesterday Doctor Combes offered us that box in her presence, and I read in her eyes that she was dying with a desire to accept it. It was necessary to allow it. But if you knew with what precautions I surrounded myself. In order to go to the theatre, I waited till the play had begun, that I might not meet any one in the passages. I remained all the time in the back part of the box behind my wife and her father, and left before the close of the play. By taking this course, dear mother, I obeyed your recommendations as to being cautious. Don't be, therefore, uneasy in this direction, for I am not. I have suffered enough, as you know, and it seems impossible that I am destined to suffer any more."

"Ah! I hope so," said she, "I believe it. My prayers have ascended to God, and he has heard them."

On pronouncing these words a gentle rap was heard at the door.

A chambermaid, who had been in the service of Madame Gérard since her arrival in Paris and her installation in Léonia Street, entered the room.

"What is wanted, Julie?" asked Madame Gérard.

"Here is a letter for monsieur, which an errand-boy has just brought."

"Give it to me," said George.

He took the letter and the maid retired.

"Who can be writing to you?" said Madame Gérard, looking at her son.

Suddenly she saw him totter and turn pale. She ran to him.

"Ah," he exclaimed, handing her the letter, "you were right!"

She read as follows:

"At last I have found you, my dear George; it is bad in you to live for so long a time in the same city as I do, and not give me any sign of your existence. You did not know my address, perhaps. Well, here it is: Neuilly Avenue, first hotel on the right as you come from

Paris. Take a coach quick and come to see me, I am alone. Don't keep me waiting for you, for I should complain to your father-in-law, who is one of my best friends. Till very soon,

"CORRA."

## XVIII.

ONE hour after receiving Cora's letter George alighted from his carriage in front of the hotel in Neuilly Avenue. Though paler than usual, he appeared calm and resolute. He was undoubtedly expected, as the servant who went to the door, without asking for his name, showed him up to a small boudoir in the second story.

In about five minutes Cora made her appearance.

She had on a white cashmere robe,—a kind of antique *peplum*,—cut very low, and which, being held upon the shoulders by cameos, left the arms entirely bare. A gold band surrounded her waist and served to set off a fuller hip development. With one hand she brought adroitly over the lower portion of her face a white blond-lace scarf attached to the top of her head by a shell-comb, after the Spanish fashion.

Although it was still daylight outside, the blinds of the room in which Cora received George were already shut, and the candles were lighted on the mantel-piece.

"I find you at last," said Cora, after a moment's silence.

"I thought I should see *you* no more," replied he.

"And *I* was sure of finding you again, sooner or later."

"May I know why you wish to see me, and why you have written me to come?"

"I will inform you; but as our conversation may be long, I will request you to be seated."

"As you please," said he, taking a seat some feet from Cora, who took her place on the sofa.



She adjusted the folds of her robe, arranged her scarf so as to allow her to talk, at the same time concealing her face as much as possible, and resumed the conversation as follows :

"So your name is no longer George du Hamel, but George Gérard. You have been living in Léonia Street since you left—the south of France. You are the son-in-law of Monsieur De Brives, a friend of mine, and husband of one of the prettiest women in Paris."

"You are very nearly right," said he. "But what do you wish to come at? Have you anything to ask of me? Or do you mean to give vent to recriminations and threats?"

"I have nothing to ask of you," responded she; "my position, as to fortune, is as good as yours, if not superior. Threats would be in bad taste and utterly useless; for you will understand me by half a word. My letter contained none, and you hastened to come at my call, in spite of your retired habits. As to recriminations, I will explain myself clearly with you on this point. Excuse me if I have the bad taste to cast a look upon the past. It is in the interest of my explanations."

"I will listen," replied he.

"I arrived in France," said she, "about ten years ago. I was young, beautiful, and happy, and formed a thousand plans. In a moment my ardently cherished schemes all vanished. That beauty of which I was so proud, and which was to help me in making my fortune, had just disappeared. A pistol-shot had disfigured me. I dreamed of light and sunshine, but was forever doomed to obscurity and darkness. I had no longer but one thought, and that was to be revenged on the man whose fit of passion, implacable jealousy and brutality, had inflicted upon me the most cruel of punishments for a woman, namely, to be ugly, and to be conscious of one's ugliness, because of the remembrance of former beauty. I accused that man of a crime he never

committed, that he never thought of. Indeed, if he is quick tempered, and his hand too prompt, his delicacy and loyalty are excessive. Had it not been for that accusation of robbery or theft, he probably would not even have been condemned. He *was* condemned, thanks to me and because of me. I was avenged. We are both avenged, my dear George du Hamel."

"What next?" asked he.

She resumed, without seeming to have heard him.

"If I had not an excellent disposition, I might, it is true, complain that my vengeance has not been complete, that my condemned man has not entirely expiated his crime. I might remind him of Article 47 of the Penal Code, which I have studied a good deal, and which he knows as well as I. This article forbade his going to Paris, assigned to him for a residence a provincial town, and subjected him, for life, to a kind of most painful servitude. He paid no regard to these police regulations, and I do not blame him. He made for himself Léonia Street his mysterious and charming residence. He entered an honorable family, and married an accomplished woman. That is capital, perfect! Ah, truly, in this world every one cuts his way through the best he can. His position is desperate, and he has found the means of rendering it very agreeable. Why should I blame him,—I who have, in *my* way, done very nearly as he has done? Though ugly or homely enough to frighten any one, I have succeeded, with ingenious combinations and a thousand little artifices, in rendering myself endurable, supportable. I arrived in Paris without friends and without business relations. To-day I have excellent ones of both classes. I was in possession of a hundred thousand francs; hardly enough to live on. I now enjoy an income of sixty thousand francs, and am proprietor of two hotels. He and I both, therefore, have repaired in the best way we could our respective misfortunes.



The effect of the pistol-shot has been less terrible than I supposed, and the consequences of condemnation to hard labor very nearly null or inconsiderable. Therefore no more recriminations, on the one side or on the other. Is that well understood?"

"Perfectly," said George, who had listened to Cora with the greatest composure; "but I do not suppose that you have sent for me to tell me that you have no ill-will against me, and that you find yourself in a flourishing condition."

"In the first place," replied she, "I am glad to give you the information I have imparted. Pray think. Happy as you are, you must have more than one thought of that poor Cora. You have asked yourself what had become of her, and how she had got out of her troubles. Perhaps even you have pitied her, and your excellent heart has been moved with compassion. Now, dear friend, all your inquietudes have disappeared. Cora is in good health, and less homely than you supposed. She is as well shaped as formerly, and perhaps better. She has the manners, elegance, and style, pardon me, which you did not think she possessed. She is rich, very rich, and in the way of becoming more so. She receives the most distinguished men of Paris, among whom is your father-in-law. This good news well pays for the trouble you have taken to pay a visit to Neuilly Avenue."

"Doubtless," said he, rising; "and now that I have heard it, permit me to retire."

"Oh, no!"

"Have you anything else to say to me?"

"Certainly. Otherwise I should not have made my toilette so expensive. I have been at this expense wholly on your account, my friend. Pray look at me."

She rose, stepped towards the mantelpiece, arranged the candlesticks so as to be in a better light, and placing herself in front of George,—

"Does not this dress admirably set off this waist which you formerly liked so

much? Look at these black satin slippers. Have you ever seen so small a foot in a more elegant envelope? . . . And my neck is still young, my hair sufficiently abundant and black. My eyes, you see, are such as you have already known them. I know well that the lower part of my face is not the same, but I conceal it so skillfully by the aid of this lace, that I am sure *you* would not have the courage to reproach me with the changes that have taken place."

George looked at her with astonishment, trying to divine the object of such unexpected coquetry.

"Now," said she, after again *posing* in front of him as a model before a painter, "let us sit down again and have another talk."

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## XIX.

"My friend," said she, "it is your misfortune and mine that you have never understood me. With a woman like me one does not conduct himself as with others, and you committed great errors in the early period of our connection. And yet, the way in which it was formed ought to have enlightened you. What was it in you that captivated me? What reasons urged me to write to you and beg of you to come and see me after you had recovered from your wounds? It was the firmness with which you had taken up my defense when I was refused an entrance into the New Orleans theatre, and the intrepidity displayed the next day at the time of your duel with John de B—. This energetic conduct had, if not conquered my heart,—it is possible I have none, as you have often told me,—at least excited my imagination. I proved it to you by choosing you for my first lover and by giving myself up to you without reserve.

"Your *début*, your first steps, attracted me to you. You had made for yourself



an exceptional situation, and it was necessary to keep it, and remain on the pedestal that I had raised for you. But if, on certain occasions, you are unquestionably brave, and if this bravery is pushed on to temerity and violence, in ordinary life you do not show yourself, or at least *did* not formerly with me, sufficiently firm and resolute. Our first quarrel dates from a day when you found me whipping one of my mulatto girls. This was my right, but the spectacle displeased you. Do you know what you ought to have done? You should have taken the whip from my hands, and if I protested, have treated me as I was treating my slave. My wrath might have been terrible I know. You would have avoided the scene by going home, and the next day I should have begged of you to return, and asked your pardon. I know who I am. I have slave blood in my veins. What consoles me is, that many white women, many Parisians, have the same blood as I, and are attached only to men who know the need of maltreating and brutalizing them."

She stopped to take breath, and then continued with greater calmness:

"Instead of doing as I have just indicated, you lectured me, reasoned with me, and tried to touch my feelings, and I begged you to let me alone. Instead of waiting for me to return to you, you ran to me like a suppliant; when it was my duty to beg pardon and humble myself before you, you had inverted the parts, my friend, you had alienated your rights, and from that day your cause was lost.

"I had given myself a master, that master abdicated his authority of his own accord; I seized it immediately and abused it, because women are extremists in all things. For them there is not a shadow of difference between command and tyranny.

"Behold all your misfortunes date from the time I speak of. You have never been able to regain your lost rights. You had relinquished your sceptre to me, and

I held it with so firm a grasp that it could never again be lost. Your anger I laughed at. Your revolt I ridiculed. Had you not given me the exact measure of your weakness, and did I not know that, in spite of my errors and faults, you would still return to me repentant and submissive?

"The life that I made you lead then you would still lead, if I had wished it, or rather if I had not abused my power and passed the limits of tyranny.

"But it is always so. When one is in power he hopes to reign forever; and because he has suppressed certain insurrections, he does not see the revolution that is silently brooding, and requires only a pretext for bursting forth. This pretext I furnished you in Havre. At the moment when I thought myself stronger than ever you suddenly revolted, and I fell under your blows.

"There you have our history; I have told *your* errors, and I have told *my* faults."

"And I have attentively listened," replied George; "but I have yet to learn the object of this double biography."

"We are coming to that," said she; "rather slowly, it is true, for what remains for me to say is rather delicate."

He looked at her with astonishment.

She resumed, but this time her voice was excited and her gesture energetic:

"You thought, and I thought for a long time, that the day when, in order to render your position more difficult and take from you all hope of being acquitted, I accused you of robbery,—we thought, I say, both of us, that one single feeling actuated me, the desire of vengeance. We were both of us mistaken. I hated you, that is certain. I was happy to return you wound for wound and blow for blow. But I said to myself at the same time, he has disfigured me that I may have no more lovers; I will send him to the galleys, that he may have no more mistresses. It was by punishing me as you had done, by chastising me in a terrible



manner, that you regained your authority. You became the master again, and I the slave. You were no longer the weak and cowardly heart that I abused for two years, that I martyred at my pleasure; you were in my eyes a man, a man who avenges himself, a man who for a long time has disdained to strike those who offend him, but who strikes without mercy when once his arm is raised."

While uttering these words, Cora had advanced towards George, and was looking him steadily in the face.

"Yes," said she, "I hated you. Instead of sending you to Toulon, I could have wished you might be sent to the scaffold. But I had begun to love you again. I loved you as I did the day following your duel, as on the day when I gave myself to you for the first time. What do I say? I loved you a thousand times more. And the oftener I looked in my glass, and the more frightful I appeared, the more I loved you, because I was well convinced that you could no longer love me, and that all was up between you and me. I wanted to forget you, and put some other in your place. I gave myself to little Victor Mazilier, you know, him of whom you were jealous. He had known how to take me, and he ruled me by his imperious tone and dictatorial manner. But I saw you again at Toulon, and Mazilier has no longer an existence for me. Do you remember my visit to Toulon? I advance, you recognize me, and your head, which you held down, is raised. Your whole body becomes erect, your eyes are fixed on me, and you wrap yourself in your cloak of infamy as a sovereign in his mantle of royalty! Ah, since that time I have had but one thought, which was to see and find you again!"

As she had still advanced towards him, and continued looking at him, he left his place, stepped to the mantel-piece, took a cigarette which was in a cup, lighted it by one of the candles, and said,—

"Well, you *have* found me again, and now what?"

She came towards him, exclaiming,—

"How I love you as you now look! how disdainful!—how well you assume the attitude suitable to a man who is conscious of his moral worth, and who holds in contempt a creature like me! But I love you, I still love you!"

"That is possible; but I do *not* love you."

"You love another. I know her; I have seen her. She is charming, and therefore I am terribly jealous of her."

"What?" said he, frightened.

"You shall abandon her for me, or else——"

"Or else?"

"She shall cruelly suffer."

"Wretch!" exclaimed he, springing towards her.

"Take care, violence results in no good to you."

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## XX.

NOTWITHSTANDING the equanimity he had evinced from the beginning of this scene, and which seemed to have been self-imposed, George was not master of himself when Cora dared to speak of his wife. But he had acquired during ten years too much self-control to allow his anger to exceed certain limits. In an instant it was appeased. All his coolness returned, and he took his seat in front of his old mistress, looked steadily at her, and said, without raising his voice,—

"Thus you have just unmasked. You have renounced the soft words and pacific protestations with which you received me. 'I will make no threats,' said you; 'what would be the use, you will understand by half a word?' I did not wish to understand, and immediately forth came the threat from your lips. Well, so much the better. I prefer that, as I know now at least on what to depend. Let us explain



ourselves frankly, without reticence and without hypocrisy. Will that suit you?"

"Go on."

"You know who I am, you know my past. With one word you can inflict upon me a terrible evil. You can destroy my happiness, you can send me to prison; you can dispose of three existences: mine, my wife's, and that of my mother. I acknowledge your advantages over me. At what price do you estimate them? In order that you may not use them, but abandon them, how much do you want? My mother and I have an income of twenty thousand francs. They are yours. We will labor for a living. My wife had a dowry of four hundred thousand francs, and I intended never to touch them. But the case is a grave one. Take the dowry, I abandon it. That makes about forty thousand francs income, does it not? I agree to pay you this income yearly, so long as you are silent, be it understood, and you know that my word can be relied on. What do you want more?"

"My friend, you are talking nonsense. I have already told you that I was richer than you, your wife, and your mother put together. I will have nothing to do with your money, and you insult me when you offer it."

"What do you wish then? Be definite."

"I have already been definite enough. It was not my fault if you didn't understand."

"You have spoken to me only of your love. —I don't believe in it. That your imagination is now unnaturally excited, I grant. The life that I have led, and which creates for me an exceptional position; the mysteries which surround me, my title perhaps,—for it is a title for you,—of liberated galley-slave, and even that infamous livery in which you saw me at Toulon, and which gives me, in your eyes, a sort of originality; all these sad circumstances united have made an impression on your unsound mind, and carried disorder into your diseased brain. But

you do not love me. I repeat it, you do not love me."

"And I repeat to you that I *do* love you," said she. "I know better than you, I think. Yes, you are right; that costume in which I saw you, and in which I constantly see you; that *title*, as you call it, of a *liberated galley-slave*, have marked your person with a peculiar stamp, and they exalt my imagination. But the question is not about my head merely. My whole being belongs to you, understand; my *whole* being, my heart included. Ah, don't tell me that I have none! It does not perhaps resemble that of other women; it is more gangrened than theirs, but I have one, for I feel it beat, and it makes me suffer,—yes, you need not shrug your shoulders, it *suffers*, I tell you, it suffers from your disdain and contempt, which I approve of, however, and which make me love you the more. It suffers especially when I think of your wife, who is charming, when I am so ugly, who is adorable and whom you adore. Ah, if you had lived modest and resigned with your mother, in one corner of Paris, I should not perhaps have thought of disturbing your solitude! I should not have written you to come and see me, and you would not be here. I should have tried to forget you, as I formerly succeeded in doing; and, in the company of some Victor Mazilier, might have calmed my ridiculous transports. But I find you in the heart of Paris almost, rich, brilliant, and happy. You are the husband of a splendid woman, who adores and loves you. It is an injustice, and I will not tolerate it. It is to me that you belong, and not to her. It is I that you would still love if you had not disfigured me. I am not willing that she should profit by my ugliness or deformity; that she should benefit by the blow you gave me; that you may say to her, 'I adore you,' to me, 'You horrify me.' You love me no longer. So be it. But I am not willing that you should be happy through her, and I am unwilling that you should make her happy."



"Do you insist upon it that you love me? Come, throw off your mask entirely, and confess that vengeance is your object. Formerly you accused me of robbery, you sent me to prison, but that did not suffice. Now you wish to injure me in that which I hold most dear upon earth. Ah, you are indeed still the same woman! But I will not stop to reproach you with your infamy. Do you understand me? Speak, what do you want, what do you *exact*? If I am still here, you know very well it is because it is necessary to capitulate with you. Let us see. Come, dictate your orders."

"Well, here they are," said she. "You shall divide your time between your wife and me. When you are not with her, you must be here with me, in this hotel. You will continue to love her, that I cannot prevent; but you must let me see you, in my turn, and repeat to you that I love you. Notice my generosity. I could require that your whole time should be devoted to me."

"*Generosity*, do you say? I call it a refinement of corruption and cruelty."

"It is possible. But do you accept? I will take it upon myself to explain your presence in my house. Your father-in-law himself will present you, will become your accomplice, and palliate your conduct. I have my plan."

"My father-in-law is an honest man."

"He is a gambler, and excessively fond of gamblers."

"Ah! do you wish——"

"I wish you to spend your evenings seated in front of me in my drawing-room."

"And then what?"

"We shall see; don't be troubled. You have spoken the word. You have spoken of *refinement*. I am a *refined* woman, and in that capacity I can *sense* all situations without ever giving offense."

"But I should soon pass for your lover."

"I count upon that. What glory for me when it shall be said, 'Do you know

that charming Madame Gérard, daughter of Monsieur De Brives? Her husband deserts her for Cora'!"

"And if these reports should reach the ears of my wife?"

"Eh! my friend, you must take care that they do not reach them. Ask other husbands how they manage in such cases."

"For how long a time shall I be subjected to this trial?"

"As long as I shall love you. When I shall no longer be in love with you I will restore your liberty, think no more about you, and never betray your secret. You may rely on that."

"Well, well," said he, "this is a new kind of blackmail, love-blackmail."

"The word is just the thing," replied she with a smile. "I will remember it."

He rose suddenly, approached her, and said,—

"If I refuse to submit to the infamy you propose, what will you do?"

"I will expose you," said she without hesitation, looking him in the face. "My measures are taken. I foresaw your resistance, and at the same time that I wrote you to come to my house I wrote to the attorney-general."

She opened a small rosewood desk which was in her boudoir, took from it a letter not yet sealed, and presenting it open to George, she said,—

"Read."

He read the letter, which was as follows:

"The man named George du Hamel, condemned ten years ago to five years of hard labor, after serving out his time at Toulon, has broken the *ban of surveillance*, and now lives in Paris, Léonia Street, under the name of Gérard. Already a victim of this convict, I have reason to fear at this time that he may show towards me fresh violence, and find myself obliged to call your attention to the same."

"You are all right," said George, without losing his equanimity, returning her the letter.



"Am I not?" said Cora. "After your departure, I shall carefully seal this letter, put on the address, and shut it up in a safe place. It shall not be sent unless you oblige me to send it. But you have too much good sense, dear George, to provoke me to do it."

At the same time she advanced, rested one of her arms upon his shoulder, and said, in her sweetest voice,—

"What is asked of you, after all? It is the permission to love you. And she who implores you is the one whom you formerly adored, even to the extent of wishing to kill her."

And when he repelled her, she straightened up and said, with the tone of a mistress of the house of whom one of her visitors is taking leave,—

"*Au revoir*, dear sir; in a few days,—a week at furthest,—I can't give you any more."

Then she rang the bell, to give notice in the anteroom that some one was going to leave.

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## XXI.

WHEN on leaving Cora George found himself in Neuilly Avenue, night had set in. The carriage that had brought him was still waiting for him at the door. He dismissed it and went on foot down the avenue leading to the Triumphal Arch and the Elysian Fields.

His head was on fire and his lungs oppressed. He had need of air and motion. It was necessary he should reflect on what had just taken place, that he should endeavor to penetrate the darkness which had suddenly enveloped him, that he should sound the abyss which had opened beneath his feet.

In the presence of Cora he had kept a good countenance. He was unwilling that she should notice his fears and rejoice at the harm she was doing

him. Scarcely did he change color when she threatened him with exposure. To all her cruelties he had opposed an unchangeable coolness. One would have thought, to see him and hear him, that he was invulnerable to the blows that might be given him. But now that he was in the street, Cora could no longer see him and listen to him, nor read his anguish in his face. He was alone and in open space. There was no one to disturb him in that part of Paris, deserted in the evening. He was at leisure to tremble, to suffer, and complain.

What! had she found him when he thought himself so concealed? Was he still dependent upon that creature? Could she dispose of his life and lot, as also of the life and happiness of the two persons whom he loved the most in the world, his wife and mother? In a word, was it in her power to kill them, yes, *kill* them? The one exhausted by all that she had suffered, could she hold out against new sorrows? the other in feeble health, affected by a disease to which any emotion may be fatal, could she bear the cruel emotions which threatened her? No, he could not be deceived in this direction. The existence of his mother and of his wife was in suspense, and depended on his obedience to the orders of Cora, or upon his refusal to submit to the whims of that creature. As to his own existence, it was not necessary to think of it, or make any account of it. It was connected with that of Marcelle. If Marcelle died, he should die also, that was certain. He and she were one and the same person. They had but one soul and one life, and could die but once, at the same time and by the same blow. He thought so at least.

Thus, for a moment, ideas of suicide had taken possession of his mind.

"If I should kill myself," said he to himself, "Marcelle would die immediately, and would never know my past history."

But had he the right thus to dispose of



the life of that young woman, and make himself her executioner?

She might perish by the blows of Cora! but she ought not to fall by any act of him.

What, then, must be done? It was important to decide upon something before returning to Léonia Street. When one has decided upon a course to be taken, however terrible it may be, he may wear a face that will not inform any one of the tortures that fill his heart. But when he is irresolute and uncertain, when he does not know on what to decide, he is sure to betray himself. He gave himself an hour to form an irrevocable resolution.

Having rid himself of his idea of suicide, he thought he ought to return home to tell Marcelle that their happiness was threatened, and propose to her to depart immediately. They would go and conceal themselves abroad, and have no more connection with France. But what would Marcelle think of so sudden a departure? What would Monsieur De Brives say? And besides, would he not remain in Paris? and in her anger at seeing her victims escape her, would not Cora hasten to inform him of the past life of George? And then, she was a woman of precaution. As she had, in advance, written to the attorney-general, so she must have taken measures to make the project of flight impracticable.

"Suppose," said he suddenly to himself, I should go to Monsieur X——, and say to him, 'You have always believed in my innocence, and have deplored my condemnation; you esteem and love me. Come with me, you are disinterested in the question; you are well known and venerated, and will be believed. We will go and see my wife, and in your presence I will confess everything relating to myself. I *will* have that courage. She shall learn my crime and the punishment that followed it, but you will be there to say to her that punishment was too severe, and was unmerited. It would never have been inflicted had it not been for the infamous calumny uttered by that miserable wo-

man. You will explain to her all that has taken place. She will understand, through you, that my honor has not been tarnished, and that——"

He stopped, and pursuing the same idea under another form, said,—

"Yes, but she will reproach me for not having told her the whole truth sooner. When, at Baden, I was urged by her to read to her the trial of that unfortunate man whose situation was so much like mine, she said, 'I do not reproach him for his crime, but I blame him for his lack of frankness. One owes the truth, and the *whole* truth, to her who is to bear your name, to her who confides to you her destiny.' Ah, how well I remember those words! They cut me to the heart. But I admit that she may pardon my crime against society and towards her. I admit that she may *wish* to forget the punishment inflicted upon me, but will she be able to do it? Will not her imagination carry her back incessantly to the time when I was in prison at Toulon? Will she not see me with a chain riveted to my ankle, and the convict's dress on my shoulders? This spectacle, so pleasing to Cora, and which attracts her towards me, will it not have on Marcelle a contrary effect? Will she not avoid me and cease to love me? A woman like Marcelle cannot experience the same sensations as a woman like Cora. The same causes ought to produce on each of them opposite effects. But I am mistaken. She has pardoned me, she has forgotten and conquered her prejudices; but the Article 47, which I have eluded, my impending arrest, the prison,—again the prison!

"No, it is impossible! it is impossible! I cannot confess, I cannot!

"But if I neither kill myself, flee the country, nor confess, what *shall* I do?

"Shall I obey that woman's orders? Shall I—— What, spend half of my life with that creature that I abhor, and have it said that I prefer her to my wife, and sacrifice my wife to her, and deceive Marcelle for her!



"To be obliged to sit by her side and hear her talk to me of love, when Marcelle is troubled about my absence, perhaps jealous and suffering! It is frightful! There is no punishment to be compared with this: to adore one woman and live with another whom one detests; to leave the arms of the one and rush to the embraces of the other."

Suddenly he paused. A new idea had just crossed his mind. "Suppose," said he to himself, "that she is in love with me. Suppose that I have really inspired her with one of those passions which lead to every excess. Her brain is already diseased. One is never in possession of all his faculties when he carries corruption and perversity to such an extent. Moral disorders may carry in their train the greatest physical ones. Ah, this being true, I *might* be freed from her! I might be avenged! Have I not the right to be avenged if, especially, I see as a consequence my safety and that of my mother and wife?"

It was nine in the evening when he returned to Léonia Street. Madame Gérard, in spite of anxious alarms, had found a thousand ways of explaining the tardiness of her son; and soon George, who, by an incredible effort of will, appeared as calm and good-humored as usual, succeeded in dissipating all the anxieties of Marcelle.

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## XXII.

EIGHT days had been given to George by Cora to make his appearance again at her house. He profited by this latitude, without showing the least haste to anticipate the time which had been assigned him as the extreme limit.

It was on the evening of the eighth day that he entered the hotel of Neuilly, under the auspices of Monsieur De Mézin.

He had at first applied to Monsieur De

Brives for this presentation, who could not conceal his astonishment.

"How, *you* at Cora's! For what object? Are you a gambler?"

"I have never touched a card in my life."

"At Cora's they gamble all the time. No other amusement is known."

"Exactly so."

"Do you wish to learn to play?"

"Have no fear, it is for a useful purpose."

"Useful? Are you going to study gamblers, and write a book about us?"

"Don't ask me for my secret."

"I have guessed it: that is it. Ah, my friend, how many things you can say! I will furnish you some documents, if you desire it."

"In the mean time, will you introduce me?"

"It is a very delicate matter, dear friend. Pray think, my son-in-law at Cora's, and brought by me! What will people say? If you should be unlucky, if you should lose——"

"Don't be uneasy; I am master of myself."

"You know nothing about it, as you have never gambled. If the question were about introducing you into a club, it would be a different thing; but at the house of a woman——"

"Oh, a woman!"

"Still very charming, I assure you. Ask Mézin, he is delighted with her."

"Are you afraid for me?"

"No, indeed, I am afraid of the reflections people will make, of the—ah, I must decidedly refuse! I have never been prudent in my life on my own account, but I will be on yours. It is easier. I will not present you. But if, with a serious object you are really desirous of studying Cora's drawing-room, well——"

"Well?"

"Apply to De Mézin the first time you see him at my house."

Monsieur de Mézin hastened to put himself at the service of George. Having



been rejected by Mademoiselle Marcelle de Brives when he asked for her hand, under the pretext that he was a gambler, he rejoiced at the thought that George Gérard might become as much of a gambler as himself, and more so, perhaps, and to such a degree as to make Mademoiselle De Brives regret having preferred George to him. Too scrupulous to cause the least prejudice to his rival, he was glad to see him injure himself in the opinion of his wife, who detested gambling.

Cora received George in the most gracious manner possible, without seeming to show that she was acquainted with him.

She did not try to speak with him in private, and appeared to make no difference between him and the rest of her guests. In the course of the evening, when the rest had taken their seats at the gambling-table, she proposed to him to sit down with them. He accepted, as much to avoid a painful *tête-à-tête* as to explain his presence in the house.

Cora took a seat in front of him, on a sofa near the table. From her position she could observe him at her ease and not lose one of his movements. The long evenings and whole nights which she had so often passed in isolation—as she did not gamble, and everybody around her did—were now going to be of some interest to her. Her eye would no longer be bounded by the same horizon. It would no more rest on fatigued faces, whiskers of desperate uniformity, pretentious moustaches, and bald craniums; but it would repose at length upon a face truly energetic, which she could take pleasure in studying, whose least changes she could analyze, and which already bore the indelible mark of the sufferings which she herself had caused.

George did not seem to be aware of the attention of which he was the object. During the whole evening his object seemed to be not to raise his eyes upon Cora. Seated near Monsieur De Mézin, who had taken it upon himself to teach him

the first elements of the game, he soon understood it, and played as every one else did. He played even better than the rest, for he won more frequently. Has not fortune made it a rule to favor those who have not yet acquired a habit of imploring her? “Full hands to the innocent,” says the proverb.

Monsieur De Mézin rejoiced at the success of his pupil. “These first gains,” said he, “will inspire him with a desire of new ones. He will become as much of a gambler as we. But he will not have my experience; gambling will be more fatal to him than to me, and Mademoiselle De Brives will perhaps one day regret me.”

He was mistaken. One is born a gambler, but rarely made so. So with the poet. *Poeta nascitur, non fit.\** As the passion for gambling is generally incurable, so certain men will never understand the pleasure felt in handling over and over, all night long, colored bits of paste-board, and in pronouncing the same words. They will experience no pleasing emotion at a gambling-board, and will not admit that any one else can. Besides, the passion for gambling, though pretty general, is less common than is usually thought. Many persons gamble because they have need of money and hope to gain. Give such the sum they want, and they will not gamble. Offer, on the contrary, to a *born* gambler, a hundred thousand francs if he will never touch a card, and he will refuse them.

It was, therefore, innocently that George gained all the evening. He would have asked for nothing better than to limit himself to this first and only victory and never return to Cora's, but she understood the matter differently. When he took leave of her, near two o'clock in the morning, at the same time with others of her guests, she said to him, “Till to-

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\* The author will excuse the translator for introducing this Latin quotation, which was no doubt in his mind when he wrote the sentence preceding.



morrow," in a tone which gave him little hope for the future.

No incident of importance occurred during the fifteen days following this first evening. George, between eleven and midnight, went regularly to Neuilly Avenue, either alone or in company with De Mézin. After saluting the mistress of the house, and joining for a moment in the conversation of persons surrounding her, he took his seat at the gambling-table, and Cora, some minutes after, came to install herself in front of him, no more to quit for the night her post of observation. He played every evening, with the same good luck, and without any more emotion than on the first day. The profound disgust inspired by the task he was compelled to perform, his complete indifference as to loss or gain, imparted to him a coolness and unchanging equanimity which were sufficient to account for his constant good luck. Gold and bank-bills continued to be piled up before him, to the astonishment of De Mézin, who, interested in the business, began to repent of having introduced him so cheerfully to the house.

The losses which the latter now made every evening were not sufficiently compensated by the pleasure felt in seeing George depart from the duties of a husband. He began at the same time to be troubled by the persistency with which Cora kept her eye fixed upon his neighbor at the table. He thought at first that he was the object of this mute contemplation, and inwardly rejoiced at it; but he soon found himself obliged to confess his error. He asked himself at times if George, after supplanting him in the affections of the young girl he wished to marry, was going to take from him the woman also whom he, for a long time, had been desirous of making his mistress.

Very soon he had no longer any doubt in this direction. One evening, or rather one morning, at the time Cora's visitors were taking leave of her after an excel-

lent supper, she said to George, who was about to depart,—

"Pray do me the favor to remain a few moments with me, my dear sir; I would like to speak with you."

George, without uttering a word, bowed and let Cora's guests retire.

In a rage, De Mézin took Monsieur de Brives' arm, saying,—

"What does that mean? Your son-in-law remain here when we all go away, and you say nothing?"

"What can I say to him at this time?" replied Monsieur De Brives. To-morrow I shall have a serious conversation with him."

"But at least you will inform your daughter?"

"I shall do everything in the world, on the contrary, to hide from her the conduct of her husband. I have succeeded so far, and hope I shall be able to continue."

Whilst talking in this way, Cora, having heard the hotel door shut again, turned to George and said,—

"Please follow me. We shall be more comfortable in my boudoir."

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### XXIII.

ON reaching the second story, Cora showed George into the boudoir where she had received him two weeks before. The candelabra over the fire-place were all lighted. A small rock-crystal chandelier, suspended from the ceiling, sparkled with light. In the fireplace some billets of wood, just thrown in, were joyously crackling, while bunches of roses were blooming in their vases, and diffusing delicious perfumes through the air. This room, to which the mistress of the house rarely retired, and which was always shut during the evening, had evidently been prepared an hour or two before for the reception of George. In the midst of the supper the idea had



doubtless occurred to Cora to have a private conversation with her preferred guest, and she had given orders accordingly.

Her toilette, which she had not had time to modify, was very nearly the same she wore every day. But hardly had she entered the room, and under the pretext that it was too warm, she threw off the sort of black lace scarf or mantle which had, during the night, covered her shoulders, and the blaze from the fire-place and the light from the candles immediately revealed one of the most admirable busts that could be imagined.

George did not appear to take any notice of the preparations that had been made for his reception, nor of Cora's preliminary coquetry. Standing with his back to the fire-place, he seemed to be waiting to be spoken to.

After a minute or two, Cora, who had taken a seat, said, "Well, you have not, I hope, any reason to complain of me?"

"Do I complain?" asked he.

"You spend," said she, "delightful evenings with men of great distinction, and gain a good deal of money."

"A great deal *too* much," replied George. "You have condemned me to gamble, but not to keep the truly ridiculous sums that chance offers me. I have laid them by. They amount, for fifteen days, to more than eighty thousand francs. Here they are."

He drew from his pocket several rolls of bank-bills, and put them on the mantel-piece.

"That money belongs to you," said Cora; "I don't want it."

"And I am not willing to keep it. It burns my fingers. Do with it what you please; I will not take it again."

"You do wrong. To-morrow you may lose, and it is not just that you should endanger your fortune."

"Oh, for the life that I lead," he said, sadly, "I shall always be rich enough."

"Indeed; does not your life suit you?" said she.

He made no reply.

She resumed:

"The persons whom you meet here every evening come to my house for their pleasure."

"I do not share their tastes."

"And I know," replied she, "at least three or four of these gentlemen who would be very glad to be in your place at this time. Indeed, my friend, you are ungrateful to fortune; she has never favored you so much."

"Ah, a truce to pleasantries," said he, quitting his place and walking about the room. "I obey your orders. I pay for your silence the price you have set upon it. But you have not, I imagine, the idea that I am very happy in obeying you. Oh!" continued he, in a voice profoundly sad, without addressing himself to Cora, and as if talking to himself, "very happy indeed to pass my evenings and nights in this establishment turning cards over and over in company with people who are strangers to me, whilst yonder are those who are distressed by my absence, and the change that has been suddenly made in my habits. At this moment they are expecting me, perhaps, and have not retired to bed. The one does not know where I am, would like to know, and inquires; the other makes no answer, or else, obliged to evade, she invents any story to explain my long absence. She smiles when she has death in her soul. Ah, hold, do not speak! Do not evoke those recollections. I am here: do not force me to be yonder, near her. Your boudoir is festive. The fire is burning in your fire-place, your lights are brilliant, and your flowers are in bloom. You reign as a sovereign in the midst of all this luxury. Ah, do not compel my thoughts to visit that dark room where my mother on her knees and in tears is praying for her son, still separated from her, still condemned to new punishments!"

This was the first time that he had allowed himself to be overcome by his feel-



ings, and to be moved to tears. He had for a moment suspended his walk about the room, and had leaned on his elbow upon a pier-table. His head rested in his hand, and his eye seemed to be in search of some distant object.

For a moment Cora contemplated him in silence. Then, on a sudden, with one bound she darted towards him, and approaching her face to his, exclaimed,—

“I love you.”

Immediately George recovered his self-control, smiled in a strange manner, and said,—

“You love me: well, what next?”

“Will you love me?” asked she.

“You know well that it is impossible,” said he.

“Will you become my lover again?”

“Do you order it?”

“I supplicate you.”

“Oh, no prayers!” said he; “orders, only orders. I am under your government. One does not pray to or supplicate his servant and slave, but dictates to him his will.”

“Well,” she replied, endeavoring to get nearer to him, “it is my *will* that you again become my lover.”

“Be it so!” said George, “I belong to you. I am your property. I am your chattel. Dispose of me.”

Hardly had he uttered these words, when she threw her arms around him and pressed her lips to his.

He made no effort to avoid her ardent caresses, but he returned none. His arms remained pendent and passive by his side. His eyes, instead of seeking Cora’s, were fixed upon one point of the boudoir, and so continued. His lips, pale and dry, and closely pressed together, did not open for a single instant. He was, as it were, inanimate, cold as marble, insensible as a statue.

This resistance exasperated Cora. She wished to triumph over this inertia, and animate this statue, but could not succeed.

“Pray look at me,” said she; “look, I am still beautiful. My eyes have never

had more expression, and have never looked upon you with so much love. This hair, that you formerly kissed with transport, is longer and blacker than before. Do you doubt it? I will undo it in your presence.” She hastily removed the pins and combs, and it fell in rich luxuriance upon her neck and naked shoulders. And as he continued to look at her without betraying the least emotion, she called to her aid the remembrances of the past, in order to awaken his torpid imagination.

“Have you forgotten,” said she, “our days and nights of love away off yonder in America? Our rooms, you remember, opened upon a garden in bloom, and through the windows came a thousand perfumes. In the distance was heard the loud voice of the river which crowded back the rising tide, and close by us the songs of the birds awakened by the sounds of our kisses. Thousands of stars, unknown in Europe, twinkled above our heads. ‘Oh!’ you murmured, in my delighted ear, ‘I have never dreamed of so beautiful a creature as you! I have never seen a form so perfect!’ You seemed unwilling to leave me for a moment; and when the first gleams of morning appeared in the horizon, we were still locked in each other’s arms. Do you wish that we should be as happy as of yore? Say, do you wish—”

“Suddenly she repelled him, exclaiming,—

“It is not a *man* that I hold in my arms, it is a *corpse*!”

“A corpse *you* will never resuscitate,” said he, in words she did not hear.

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## XXIV.

ABOUT five o’clock in the morning, after a nervous crisis which lasted nearly an hour, Cora, conquered, broken-down, and half dead, permitted George to retire.



His first thought, on finding himself alone, was to ask himself if the scene which had just taken place would be renewed, and if Cora would not give up exposing herself to a new defeat, a defeat which she could only reproach herself with, and for which it would be unjust to blame George.

She was certainly too intelligent not to understand that if the first experiment she had made to melt that icy heart had not succeeded, all other efforts would be in vain. By one surprise of the senses George *might* have fallen: now all surprise became impossible. He would be stronger because he had been able to resist at the first trial.

"It is finished," said he to himself. "She knows now that, notwithstanding my complete submission to her orders, I cannot be her lover. I shall soon recover my liberty."

Strange to say, however, that thought, instead of pleasing, seemed to thwart him. One might have said that he regretted that these scenes were not to be repeated.

In fact, had he not just experienced a rough enjoyment in coming off victorious in the struggle of mind with matter, and in being able to say to himself, "In me the heart rules the senses. The disgust inspired by the character of that woman is stronger than all the emotions that beauty can excite. I will not be her lover, not only because I do not wish to be, but because I can *not* be."

And then, what pleasure in avenging himself at last upon her who had made him suffer so much! in hearing her supplications and prayers, in seeing her crouching before him, palpitating and dismayed!

Yes, he was in hopes that these terrible struggles would be renewed, because they must necessarily, at no remote period, be followed by some catastrophe which would snatch him from the grasp of that woman, and sever the chain that riveted him to her.

His hope was not disappointed.

Scarcely recovered from her first check, Cora wished to make a new experiment upon the heart of George. She had said to herself that the aversion which he seemed to feel for her must be rather moral than physical. He could not pardon the sufferings which he had endured through her agency; and the way in which she had conducted herself towards him was certainly not calculated to make him forget the past. She resolved therefore, from a motive purely selfish, to conquer George's reserve by her repentance and generosity.

"I understand," said she to him, when they were alone together, "that you despise and execrate me. Passion, jealousy and despair justify your brutal act upon me. Nothing, on the contrary, can justify the terrible vengeance that I have drawn from it. To accuse you of robbery, to cause you to be sent to the penitentiary, was infamous! I acknowledge it now. I deplore my crime, and wish, as far as I can, to atone for it. If you should again be put on trial, or rather, if you should some day wish to obtain your rehabilitation, the declaration which I give you, written entirely by my hand and signed by me, may be of powerful aid to you. I have concealed nothing, neither my faults towards you, nor the least details of the scene when, pushed to an extremity by my impudence, you seized, without premeditation, without intention, perhaps, of hitting me, the weapon near your hand, and which I had placed within your reach. I accuse myself of having unworthily calumniated you, and, for the purpose of vengeance, of having lied to the peace-commissioner, to the attorney-general, to the judge in the preliminaries of the trial, to the court and to the jury. Never has retraction been more complete and clear. Here it is. Take it. I leave it with you."

After handing this paper open to George that he might examine it, she added: "As to the threats which I have made, I dis-



avow them. I will never add to my other sins that of denouncing you. From this day you are at liberty to see me no more. But," exclaimed she, suddenly, rushing towards George, kneeling at his feet and kissing his hands, "have pity on your slave! have pity on the unfortunate woman who adores you!

"Ah, if you knew how I suffer! I think only about you, I see only you, and I desire nothing but you. What I am going to tell you may seem ridiculous, but it is true. I can no longer either sleep or eat. You don't believe me. It is sufficient, however, to look at me to see that I tell the truth. Have you ever known me so pale? Have I not lost flesh since the last time I saw you? Ah, never has love been more ardent, never passion more intense! You once knew what jealousy is, for I made you acquainted with it. Well, you have never suffered the millionth part of what I suffer, I am sure of it. Were you *sure* that I was deceiving you? No, you feared it, believed it, that was all. I *know* that you love another, and that you love her as much as you hate me. I know that she is beautiful, that she is charming; I am acquainted with her, and I see you constantly in each other's arms. I hear the words which you whisper in her ears, and I count your kisses. Then my blood boils, my head is on fire, and a thousand emotions agitate my bosom. Ah, how I suffer! If you will not love me, why then kill me; for I cannot live without your love."

These scenes, which were often renewed, made George regret the time when Cora accused him, instead of accusing herself; when she threatened him instead of imploring him. It could not enter his heart to pity her, so repulsive and odious did that love seem to him, but he felt ill at ease before those supplications and tears. So he resolved to see her no more, and to dismiss his projects of revenge.

But *she* did not so understand it. She wrote him to return, for she wished it

and ordered it; and when he did return, she flew to him exclaiming,—

"Ah, you count upon my promises. Because I have sworn never to expose you, you shun and abandon me. Fear alone kept you at my side. You no longer fear, and immediately you forget my entreaties and mock at my sufferings. But you have been too hasty in believing my oaths. Do the oaths of a woman like Cora amount to much? I should be very good and kind indeed to keep them; but I retract them, you understand, I repudiate them. I wish to see you every day, every evening, and every night, or else I will expose you. Do you think that I am pleased with the idea of becoming insane—yes, insane? When I do not see you I feel that my reason is leaving me. You refuse to love *me*. So be it. But I exact that you be here, near me, that I may cry aloud my love for *you*."

After this, the scenes already related were renewed every evening. George remained insensible to Cora's most refined coquetry. She could not triumph over his terrible coldness; and, as she had said one day while pressing him in her arms, she thought she was hugging a dead body. But, instead of discouraging her, this impassibility exalted her to delirium and frenzy.

Thus she did not exaggerate when she asserted that her reason was gradually leaving her. If *real* love, heart love, however intense it may be, rarely carries cerebral disturbances in its train; yet love originating in the head or the senses, on the contrary, when it attains certain proportions, when education and self-respect do not come in to regulate it, leads in most cases to madness or insanity. One morning George left Cora's house more sad than ever, because of the discourse he had heard and the extravagances he had witnessed. But he said to himself at the same time,—

"This state of things cannot continue long; the crisis is approaching, and I shall soon be delivered from her."



On going down the avenue of Neuilly, he did not notice that a carriage that was standing before Cora's hotel had begun to move at the moment when he was crossing the threshold of the hotel, and followed him step by step.

At the Triumphal Arch he took a coach, and immediately the first carriage regulated its speed by the second.

They both stopped in Léonia Street; and the moment he alighted from his, he saw his wife, who had just stepped out of hers.

## XXV.

MARCELLE passed in front of George without saying a single word, and went to the pavilion in which she lived; and when her chambermaid, who was waiting for her, had opened the door, she dismissed her and entered one of the rooms on the lower floor.

George followed her. At the moment he was shutting the door, he felt that some one was pushing it from the outside. He drew back, and Madame Gérard, in her turn, entered the room.

Since the change that had taken place in George's character, she had watched almost every night, always ready to advise him on his return, to tell him what had passed during his absence, and what story she had invented to quiet the anxieties of Marcelle. It was through her vigilance and address that she had succeeded thus far in preventing her daughter-in-law from harboring too lively alarms, sufficiently justified by her husband's present mode of life.

She had at first said that her son was devoting his attention to a literary work of great importance, which obliged him to spend a part of his nights with a collaborator, whose situation would not permit of his visiting him. Marcelle, for some time, had accepted this excuse. But

some words which had unintentionally escaped from her father, some blunders intentionally made by Monsieur De Mézin, who was in pursuit of revenge, had caused her to entertain doubts as to the kind of labor to which George was devoting himself. She had learned for a certainty that her husband was gambling every night, and was suffering greatly on that account. Yet, being of a more reticent character than her mother, she had never complained directly to George, hoping that he had only an accidental love of cards, and that he would soon be returned to her. Miss Dowson was the only one who perceived her sufferings. If Marcelle had not absolutely the same character as Madame De Brives, she had inherited her disease of the heart, and the causes which had developed this disease in the mother were producing the same effects in the daughter. Their faithful friend, Miss Dowson, could not be mistaken.

Time passed on, and George returned home later and later. On several occasions, Marcelle, who herself used to keep watch a part of the night, noticed that her father returned before him. What attraction could retain her husband in the house where he was, when there was nothing to retain Monsieur De Brives? The latter was not in the habit of leaving a party before it was ended. He would stay as long as there was one who was willing to play with him.

At this time, also, Monsieur De Mézin put her on the track. He spoke in her presence, with artful and perfidious reticence, of a certain Cora, who lived in Neuilly Avenue, and gave gambling parties. He praised her merits and her physical qualities. He gave the impression that in her drawing-rooms were to be seen all the elegant of Paris, and in her boudoir the most fashionable married men.

Then jealousy, from which Marcelle had thus far been preserved, stung her to the heart; and she wished to know personally if it was in the house of this Cora



that her husband passed his nights and whether he went there as a gambler or as a lover. One evening about eleven o'clock, after bidding Madame Gérard good-night, she went out secretly, took a carriage, and went to Neuilly Avenue. She had waited long hours excited and anxious, with one hand holding the curtain of the coach window, with the other pressing against her heart, whose terrible palpitations occasioned great suffering. About four in the morning, she recognized Monsieur De Mézin, who was leaving with several persons, but there still remained some in Cora's house. All the rooms on the lower story were lighted up.

At five o'clock Monsieur De Brives appeared, in company with some friends. In order to reach his carriage, he passed near his daughter without suspecting that she was so near him; and when a coachman asked him this question, which every one has heard on leaving a party,—“Sir, is it necessary to wait, anybody else coming?” his answer was: “We are the last; you may go.”

Broken down by fatigue, and feeling more and more oppressed by the throbbing of her heart, and ashamed of what she was doing, Marcelle had for a moment the thought of returning home. Had not her father just said that there was no longer any one in the hotel which she was watching? But she said to herself at the same time that Monsieur De Brives meant, perhaps, to speak only of his gambling companions, of the invited guests who had that evening filled Cora's rooms. It might be that George was in the house, and they did not know it. Since she had waited so long, she was determined to know what to depend upon.

After the departure of Monsieur De Brives and his companions, the light no longer shone through the blinds of the lower story, and the hotel had become dark and silent. In the first story, one window only appeared to be lighted up, and Marcelle kept her eye fastened upon it. “There is still company here,” said

she to herself, “or they would not be up at this late hour.”

In a moment she thought she saw two shadows behind the window.

All at once, about six in the morning, it seemed to her that the light was changing place. It illuminated successively several windows of the first story, and then disappeared to be seen again in the lower.

The hotel door opened. A man took several steps on the sidewalk. He saw a carriage (that of Marcelle), thought it was empty, and advanced to take it.

Marcelle recognized him. It was her husband. At the moment he was about to put his hand on the coach door, the thought occurred to him that he had better walk a few minutes; he proceeded on, and was followed by his wife to Léonia Street.

Madame Gérard was ignorant of what had just taken place. She had kept awake in her room, supposing Marcelle to be in hers. When she heard George's steps on the court pavement, she went down to meet him.

By the side of her son, she saw her daughter-in-law, with her hat on her head, her shawl on her shoulders, and as pale as death.

She understood that all was lost.

Marcelle left the arm-chair into which she had thrown herself on entering the drawing-room, and advancing to Madame Gérard, without turning to George, said, in an energetic tone,—

“Madame, your son is basely deceiving me.”

“My child!” exclaimed Madame Gérard.

“Ah!” replied Marcelle, “no longer expect to comfort me, and no longer try to deceive me. I know the whole. He is the lover of a woman known among a certain class under the name of Cora. Let him dare to deny it!”

George remained silent. What could he say? How could he excuse himself? And, besides, had he the strength to do



it? Was he not broken down himself by the terrible scene which had just taken place between him and Cora? Those mad struggles that had lasted for so long a time, and in which he was obliged to expend so much energy and so much will-power, enervated and almost killed him.

At the moment when Madame Gérard was about to respond for her son and defend him for the last time, suddenly Marcelle, who had hitherto spoken angrily to her, rushed to her, took her in her arms, and burst into tears.

"Ah," murmured she, through her sobs, "that he should deceive me,—*me*, who loved him so much! Oh, it is cruel, it is very cruel! What has he to reproach me with? What have I done to him? Pray, does he wish to kill me? Ah, I feel well assured, by the throbbings of my heart, that I have not a long time to live. I shall die of the same disease that robbed me of my poor mother. I who was so fond of life from the day when he spoke to me of his love! Ah, what matters it now! God may recall me to himself,—and the sooner the better."

It was heartrending to hear her express herself in this strain.

George still remained silent, but large tears were streaming from his eyes.

"Ah," she continued, "I loved him so much that I could have pardoned everything, even a crime; but treason, never!"

Quickly Madame Gérard took her head in her hands, raised it up, and said,—

"Well, he has *not* betrayed you, my daughter; he loves you still, he loves you more than ever, and I will prove it to you; but do not forget the words you have just pronounced:—'I could have pardoned everything, even a crime.'"

## XXVI.

GEORGE had understood the intention of his mother, and Marcelle's despair had finally compelled him to speak.

To this woman, so young and pure-hearted, everything would be preferable, as she affirmed, to the thought of having been betrayed by her husband. She loved well enough now to pardon all the faults of the past; but she would never pardon an offense to her love.

The physical sufferings Marcelle spoke of, the pain in the heart which she complained of, had specially moved the compassion of Madame Gérard. She knew that in certain maladies, continuous sorrows or too lively an emotion may be followed by the most terrible accidents, and she wished at any sacrifice to avoid them. The question was once more one of life or death. There was no time for delay.

George understood so much the better the reasonings of his mother, as he had given them a long time before.

"The day when Marcelle," said he to himself, "shall believe that I am false to her, it will be better that she should know the truth."

The catastrophe which he feared had taken place. Besides, he was tired of the life to which he had been condemned. For a short time he had hoped for a natural and terrible *dénouement* of the drama that was being enacted between Cora and himself. But it had not arrived. It was necessary to look for another.

So he spoke not a word, and made no motion to prevent Madame Gérard from speaking. He did not feel courageous enough to be present at the conversation which she was going to have with Marcelle. He left the room silently, leaving the only two beings whom he loved in the world to decide upon his fate.

As soon as George had left, Madame Gérard, who still held in her arms Marcelle in tears, drew her to a sofa, seated her, took a place by her side, and said,—



"The confession you are going to hear, my dear child, will be very painful to make, and more painful, perhaps, to hear. Lend me your whole attention, and let your courage sustain mine."

She told Marcelle her whole life, from the time of her marriage. She expatiated upon the character of Monsieur Gérard, his worldly habits, his taste for expense, and his *nobiliary* pretensions, which caused him to substitute the name of Du Hamel for that of Gérard.

Being ruined at the end of a few years, he left for the United States, leaving her in charge of the education of their only son.

She gave long details about the youth of George. At twenty, he fights a duel, gets mixed up with several political quarrels, and passes for one of the most turbulent students of the Latin quarter. But he is at the same time the best of companions, and one of the most affectionate sons. He leaves for New Orleans, joins his father, and is going, perhaps, to create for himself a brilliant position in a country where he is already a favorite with every one, when he meets with Cora, gets into a quarrel with John de B——, and kills him.

Having thus given the character of her son, confessed his early errors, and related his life, in order to prepare Marcelle for the drama which she is soon to be made acquainted with, Madame Gérard describes Cora at length, and gives some details in regard to the first years of her acquaintance with George.

Madame Gérard follows her to France, analyses her conduct after her arrival at Havre, and gives to understand the exasperation the man must feel whose name she had the impudence to take. Finally she recapitulates the terrible scene related in the first part of this recital. And that there may be no doubt in Marcelle's mind, she reads to her the declaration which Cora some days before had handed to George.

When Marcelle has finished the read-

ing which informs her of the infamous calumny of which her husband was a victim, Madame Gérard gives her an account of his arrest and trial. In order to spare the susceptibility of the listener, she is not very particular as to the punishment to which George was condemned, but speaks at length of the courage with which he underwent the unmerited punishment inflicted upon him. Finally he is free. A new existence opens before him. He comes to live in Paris with his mother, and settles down in Léonia Street. Three years elapse, three years of quietness and meditation. Adversity and labor had made a man of George. His head is no longer filled with wild schemes and rash enterprises as in former times, but his heart remains the same. He sees Marcelle, hears her speak, learns gradually to know her, and perceives that he loves her.

Then he wishes to flee. His past does not allow him to marry, and prevents him from ever being happy. He departs, and condemns himself to exile and to living separate from his mother, who cannot follow him; but Marcelle is sick, and is going to die. He is recalled, he returns and sees her again.

He struggles and still struggles. Finally Madame Gérard herself tells him to get married, and when he wishes to confess everything to her who is to become his wife, it is his mother who dissuades him, for she knows that if Marcelle pardons Monsieur De Brives will not, and that he will refuse his consent to the marriage of his daughter with George Du Hamel,—a refusal which will occasion the death of two beings created for each other, made to love one another, and worthy of being happy.

They would be so still, as they have been for two years, if the fatal passion of Monsieur De Brives for gambling had not put him in relation with Cora, who hears speak of the husband of Marcelle, desires to see him, and recognizes him as the man whom she is still pursuing with



her vengeance. Madame Gérard explains finally to Marcelle how, for several months, George is under the domination of Cora, and ends thus,—

“He was not willing to sink in your estimation. Through fear of being exposed, he has condemned himself to the punishment of seeing this woman again, and of obeying her caprices; but you cannot suppose him capable of again becoming her lover. That would be a shameful and dishonorable act, which he has never been and never will be guilty of.”

She had just pronounced these last words, when the drawing-room door opened and gave entrance to Monseigneur X——.

The idea had occurred to George to go to him and entreat him to come and plead his cause with Marcelle, as he had done in court. The testimony of this man of superior merit, of this man of seventy years, whose reputation for honor was known to all men, must make a lively impression upon the mind of Madame Gérard.

Monseigneur X—— desired that the confession should be complete, that they might no more have to return to it. So he gave, in regard to the condemnation of his client, all the details which Madame Du Hamel had omitted. He was very particular, called things by their right name, and did not fear to speak of the consequences of that fatal Article 47 which gave George an exceptional position.

“Now, madame, you know the whole,” said he, in taking leave of Marcelle. “There exists no longer any secret between your husband and yourself. Nothing prevents you from being happy with the most honorable man of my acquaintance.”

Marcelle had listened to Madame Du Hamel and Monseigneur X—— without a word of reply.

She was very pale, but that paleness might be attributed to the sharp pains she seemed to feel, and which made her carry her hand every moment to her heart.

When Monseigneur X—— had left, she rose from the sofa where she had been sitting, silently crossed the room, and went up to her chamber.

George, who kept himself in the library, then rejoined his mother and questioned her by a look.

“I do not know,” said she, “but I hope.”

## XXVII.

It had just struck ten when Marcelle, after her conversation with Madame Du Hamel and Monseigneur X——, went up to her chamber. George was walking the drawing-room, where he had joined his mother, and making her repeat all she had said to Marcelle. He wanted to know if she had insisted upon different points which must have a great importance in the eyes of her who was to decide upon his fate. He asked her what was the appearance of Marcelle in such a circumstance, at such a moment; if she turned pale, if she had shown indignation, if she seemed to feel any pity. Like the criminal who tries to read in the face of the jury or judge the decision they are going to pronounce, he endeavored to guess at what course Marcelle would adopt after the sad revelation that had just been made to her.

“Ah!” said he, “she will not pardon me, she cannot pardon me! The silence she maintains is a proof of it. At first, still under the impression of the eloquent words which your heart dictated, she might have allowed herself to be affected in my favor. But reason has returned. She has forgotten all the circumstances which plead in my favor. She sees only the brutal fact: my crime, my condemnation, my past life!”

Time passed on, and Madame Gérard was beginning to share the fears of her son. When he was in a state of despair



she dared not reassure him. She would only give him her hand from time to time, draw him to her, and press him to her heart.

About two o'clock in the afternoon, they thought they heard the sound of footsteps on the stairs leading from Marcelle's chamber to the apartments below. They listened. The sound grew nearer. The library door opened and then shut. Some one was evidently coming towards the room where they were.

Marcelle appeared.

She stopped, looked at them both, and then suddenly extended her arms to George.

He understood her.

But instead of throwing himself into the arms held out in token of mercy, he kneeled at her feet, and melting in tears, uttered only this word: *Thanks*.

With one hand she raised him up, and extending the other to Madame Gérard, who was also on her knees giving thanks to God, she drew the mother and son to a sofa, sat down between them, and said to them, in an excited tone of voice,—

"If I have kept you waiting a long time, it is because that, in the interest of the future, I did not wish to be subject to any surprise. I went up to my room and repeated to myself alone all that I had just heard. I reflected for a long while, weighed everything, judged, and I now pardon. I am the wife of George Gérard, or of George du Hamel, little do I care which! He loves me and I love him. I accept all the consequences of his past life. I will share his sorrows as well as his joys; and we will remain united till death shall separate us."

They listened to her religiously, without venturing to interrupt her. She had ceased speaking, and they were still silent, with their eyes raised towards her, contemplating her with admiration.

After a moment she resumed:

"I am sick, very sick, and have been for several days. I have need of air, motion, and amusement. I would like to re-

turn with you two into the country that I have loved so much, to our house at Baden, on the banks of our dear river Limmat. If you consent, we will be en route this very day, this evening. By yielding to this caprice of a sick woman you will render me exceedingly happy."

Through delicacy she did not give her real motives for wishing to leave Paris immediately. She was afraid of some surprise on the part of Cora, some new treason.

They understood her, and hastened to comply with her desire.

It was agreed that Dr. Combes should be requested to call on Marcelle. Uneasy as to the state of her health, he had advised her some days before to travel. He would, therefore, be not at all surprised that she had decided to do so, and would take it upon himself to convince Monsieur De Brives of the absolute necessity of this precipitate departure.

While Madame Du Hamel and Marcelle were hastily preparing for the journey, George crossed the court and called on the doctor. He was told that he had gone out an hour ago with Monsieur De Mézin.

"Do you know where they have gone?" asked George.

"I heard them speak," said the domestic, "of Neuilly Avenue. It seemed to me that he was sent for to see a woman attacked with mental alienation."

"Ah!" said George, startled by these words.

"Yes, sir; it seems that since the morning the whole quarter in which this woman lives has been in a state of revolution on her account. About six o'clock she commenced in her chamber a fearful racket and disturbance, by uttering horrible cries and breaking of the furniture. They went for physicians, and the police came. As Monsieur De Mézin is one of the best friends of this woman, he wished, as soon as he became aware of her condition, to call in Doctor Combes."

George could have no doubt in this



matter. The question was about Cora. What he foresaw had happened. She had already frightened him for several days. Her conversation was no longer merely impassioned, but very extravagant. Her eyes had a strange expression. He had observed in her certain nervous convulsions to which persons are subject who have a predisposition to insanity. The last night had been more agitated than all those which had preceded it. Her language was incoherent, and her excitement excessive.

At one time George thought he would not be able to leave her. Delirious and half crazy already, she would cling fast to his garments, and it was only by dint of coolness, by intimidation, so to speak, and by his eye directed fiercely and fixedly upon her, that he had succeeded in getting rid of her.

After he left her the crisis declared itself. Insanity succeeded nervous excitation.

Cora might talk now, but no one would believe her. Monsieur De Brives would never know the past history of George. Marcelle would have always been ignorant of it if this crisis had occurred one day sooner! And yet George did not regret anything. He was happy to think that there was no longer any secret between his wife and himself, and that she had generously and nobly pardoned him. His happiness was so complete that he did not think of saying to himself, "I am avenged. Because of her, I have for five years dragged the ball and chain, and worn the livery of a state prisoner. Because of me, she will wear the strait-jacket of a mad-house."

He rejoined his mother and wife, and aided them in their preparations for departure. He rejoiced in the prospect of this journey, due to the suggestion of his wife, and which was to remove them for a long time from the theatre of their sufferings.

About six o'clock Dr. Combes arrived, and when he learned the project of his

neighbors he cheerfully approved of it. At the moment of leaving them, he took George aside and said to him,—

"I would not alarm you; but if you had not concluded to leave to-day, I should have required you to go to-morrow. The situation of your wife is a very serious one. A quiet, happy life may restore her to health, as it has already done. But do *not* forget it, the least trouble or emotion might be fatal to her. I owed you the truth."

"Be not alarmed, doctor; my wife shall have no more trouble, no violent emotion."

At seven o'clock in the evening, at the time when Marcelle, Madame Gérard, and George, ready to take their carriage, were making on the threshold their adieus to Monsieur De Brives, two men who had just entered the court, after speaking to the porter, advanced towards them.

"Monsieur George Gérard?" said the elder of the two men, carrying his hand to his hat.

"That is my name," said George, advancing.

"Then your name is George du Hamel, and you are an old galley-slave, *en rupture du ban de surveillance*. I am bearer of a writ which orders me to arrest you, which I now do."

He had scarcely uttered these words, when a loud cry was heard.

Marcelle had just fainted upon the court pavement.

Doctor Combes, who was at his window, to notice the departure of his friends and to salute them for the last time with his hand, ran up hastily, kneeled before Marcelle, and rose again, almost immediately.

His skill was of no use. He discovered that there was a rupture of the heart.

Death had been instantaneous.

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## XXVIII.

IN one of his last conversations with Cora, Victor Mazilier had, it will be remembered, formed the project of introducing a reform into his life, and of returning to Havre, to pass some time with his father. This project he had put into execution; and he had been absent from Paris more than three months, when he suddenly had a desire to see his dear boulevards again. He took the railroad, stopped at his usual *pied à terre*, or temporary lodging, passed the night there, and the next day, about ten o'clock in the morning, he started for Neuilly Avenue. He longed to know what had become of Cora during his absence, and whether her little business still prospered; if they still gambled and bet high in her rooms; if new faces were seen there, and whether she had succeeded in finding her dear George du Hamel again? He had written several times for information on these matters, but had received no answer. "Undoubtedly," thought he, "she has a grudge against me because I don't love her any longer. Women are insatiable."

Hardly had he taken a few steps in the avenue of Neuilly, when he stopped quite astonished. On the streets were to be seen groups of from ten to twenty persons talking with great animation. The farther he went the more numerous were these groups. In front of Cora's hotel there was a numerous throng. He cut through the crowd, reached the gate, and was recognized by the porter, who hesitated to open; and rushing to the house, he learnt from the domestics what was taking place. Cora, since morning, by her cries and fits of fury, had been keeping the neighborhood in a state of revolution. Physicians who had been called in had verified her insanity, and the police had been informed of the affair.

"I arrive in a *fine* time!" said Victor to himself. "If I had known of this, I

would have remained at Havre. I am not fond of such scenes."

Such was the first reflection inspired by the sad situation of her whom he had known for more than ten years. He wished to see her, however, through mere curiosity. He began, of course, by asking if there was any danger in approaching her; and when he was informed that they had been obliged to bind her, he ventured to enter her room. The unfortunate woman did not recognize him. She made desperate efforts to break the ties which confined her, and continued to utter the most inhuman cries. Victor Mazilier looked at her for a few moments, and then left the room, muttering, "She is not beautiful in that situation." This second reflection was about equal to the first.

He was about leaving the house which, according to his own expression, was far from being gay and cheerful, when, on passing into the boudoir in front of the sleeping-room, he perceived on the mantel-piece the letter which he had written to Cora the day before to announce his arrival. He took it, put it in his pocket, saying to himself, "I wish I could get hold of my other correspondence, for the police, which is very inquisitive, will be here, and I don't wish it to know of my intimacy with a crazy woman."

He knew that Cora used to put her correspondence in a little rosewood desk in a corner of her boudoir. He opened it, and while looking for his letters, he saw a large envelope sealed with wax, and bearing this superscription: "To the Attorney-General, Paris."

This was, it will be remembered, the exposure written by Cora, several months before, for the purpose of frightening George, and of inducing him to come under her control. Victor, thinking this letter might be of some importance, called a domestic, confided it to him, and told him to hand it to the first police-officer he should meet with. After this, Victor proceeded to the English coffee-



house to breakfast, hoping thereby to recover from the various painful emotions recently experienced.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, Cora's letter, sent by express, with a note appended, to the bar of the court, was opened by a substitute of the attorney-general.

At five o'clock, by virtue of Article 47 of the Penal Code, an order was issued to arrest George du Hamel, *alias* George Gérard. At seven o'clock he was arrested in the midst of his family. We have already learnt the sad result.

On seeing his wife fall upon the pavement, George uttered no cry, for the blow was too sudden and unexpected for him to suffer from it immediately. Grief is the consequence of reflection. He had not yet had time for reflection, and was, as it were, petrified.

This seeming indifference, or coldness, deceived the police agent. If he had thought that she who had just dropped dead before him was the wife of George du Hamel, he would not have dreamed, for a while at least, of performing the duty with which he was charged. But he thought George indifferent to this death, and advanced towards him. The police, moreover, are not in the habit of using much ceremony or civility in dealing with liberated galley-slaves.

George felt himself suddenly seized by the arm; and thinking they were going to hurry him off from the dead body of his wife, he turned suddenly round, and repelled the policeman with such power that he went tumbling away ten paces from him on the pavement of the court, and his companion, who had advanced in his turn, shared the same fate. While these two men were trying to get on their feet again, George stooped down, took Marcelle in his arms, went quickly to the house, passed up-stairs, entered her chamber, laid the body on her bed, locked the door, and, after barricading himself as if he were resolved to stand a long siege, went and kneeled down at the side of her bed.

These precautions were useless, as the police agents found they were not strong enough to contend with an adversary such as George. In order to enter his house it was necessary, besides, that they should be accompanied by a justice; they began at the same time to understand that they had acted with too much precipitancy at the attorney-general's office. They had taken George du Hamel for a vulgar malefactor; but he was a man of good society, and a favorite. Already the tenants of the establishment, and at their head Dr. Combes, were coming up to protest against the outrage of which he was the victim, and against the brutality of the agents. They retired, therefore, not a little ashamed, in order to confer with their immediate chief and make their report. George passed the night near the remains of his wife. He opened his door to no one, not even to his mother.

The next day, after many entreaties, Madame Du Hamel and Monseigneur X—succeeded in entering the chamber. They informed George that he had nothing more to fear, and that he would not be forcibly carried away from the corpse of his wife; that an order had just been given to suspend the execution of the writ issued against him.

"They have done wisely," murmured he, "for they would not have taken me alive."

"Then you would have disobeyed *her*," said Madame Du Hamel, pointing to Marcelle.

"How?" asked George.

"Read this letter, which was to be given to you if she should die before you, and which, at the moment she was about to leave, she had confided to her father."

He took the letter handed him and read:

"My adored, George, if I die before our arrival at Baden, I wish you to continue the journey and bury me in our garden on the bank of the river Limmat. It is my wish also, when I shall be no more, that you may not abandon your-



self to despair, but live for your mother, whom you ought not to leave alone in the world. I write you these words on the day of our departure, some hours after being informed of all your sufferings; and to tell you that I love you as in former days, and even more.

"Farewell, till we meet again above."

After reading this letter, he went to the bed where Marcelle seemed to him to be reposing, kneeled, and said,—

"I will obey."

Then he asked for flowers to cover the bed, gave instructions in regard to the casket and the service, and addressing himself to Monseigneur X—:

"Shall I be authorized," said he, "to leave France and transfer her body to Baden?"

"I hope so," replied the old lawyer.

"Go my bail, and promise that I shall return. I wish to be judged. I wish you to defend me again. I wish to protest against this barbarous law which has caused the death of Marcelle. She pardoned my past life. My arrest was the cause of her death."

He pressed the hand of his old defender, and returned to kneel before the sainted dead.

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## XXIX.

BEFORE what tribunal ought a man to be tried who is condemned to surveillance and guilty of a rupture of the ban? One of two things: either the accused, or defendant, denies his identity, or he confesses it. In the first case, he ought to be brought before the tribunal that pronounced sentence of condemnation to surveillance; in the second case, he ought to be prosecuted before the tribunal of the place where he was arrested.

George Gérard, though ready to confess that he had been condemned to five

years of hard labor under the name of George du Hamel, asked, nevertheless, through his counsel, to be judged at Rouen; and Monseigneur X— had left such favorable impressions in that city, that his request was cheerfully granted.

When the report was made in the palace of justice that after a repose of several years the old chief of advocates would again appear in court, a great excitement was produced among the young lawyers, who had all heard of his great oratorical power, but had not had an opportunity to admire it.

Accordingly arrangements were made among them to meet together on the day of his pleading, as people agree to attend the theatre when some celebrated star-actor is announced to reappear after a long absence.

This was what Monseigneur X— desired, in the interest of his client, and at his express request. He knew that the president of the tribunal, through respect for his great age and his old reputation, would allow him to speak as long as he wished, although he might not always confine himself to the case,—that he would be at liberty to lift to the height of a social thesis a very plain and simple matter,—that, finally, he would be permitted to defend not only George du Hamel in the crime imputed to him, but also to recur to the past, and obtain, if not the legal rehabilitation of his client, at least his moral re-establishment.

"As it has not been possible to keep my case secret," said George to Monseigneur X—, "it now becomes necessary to give it the greatest publicity possible. It is known in Paris that Monsieur De Brives is the father-in-law of a liberated galley-slave. In his interest, in mine, and in remembrance of her who is no more, and who has borne my name, the public ought to learn that the punishment which was inflicted upon me was unmerited."

On the 3d of June, 1868, the chamber of the tribunal at Rouen was besieged at early morn. George du Hamel, who had



returned from Baden the day before, was seated on the prisoner's bench.

After the usual formalities, Monseigneur X—— took the floor, and held it for more than two hours.

The impression produced by his pleading was immense. Contrary to all usage, he was applauded when he had finished; and the president, sympathizing with the general emotion, did not think it his duty to remind the public of the respect due to the court.

From all sides, young lawyers, as well as the old, magistrates, merchants, and fashionable women, advanced to shake hands with him.

With tears in his eyes, and *tears in his voice*, he said to them,—

“It is not to me that your hands should be tendered, but to my client, who has a right to the sympathies of honest men.”

This opinion was respected, and from all quarters hands were offered to George.

The journals which gave an account of this trial the next morning, related the following incident, which, it is said, made a deep impression upon the audience: “An esteemed merchant of Rouen, Monsieur B——, desirous of hearing the great advocate X—— for the last time, was present at the trial. Little did he care about the prisoner, or the crime of which he was accused. It was the eloquent lawyer only that interested him. Suddenly, while he listens, he thinks he has already heard the name of George du Hamel pronounced and certain facts related about him. He evokes his recollections, and remembers that he was foreman of the jury at the time of the first trial, to which the distinguished advocate alluded. His emotion becomes extreme; soon he cannot refrain from tears; and when the orator ended his plea and took his seat, he rushed towards the prisoner, took him by the hand, and asked his pardon for having formerly participated in his condemnation.”

And now it remained for the court to apply the law. So long as Article 47

shall not have been repealed, it is the duty of the court to cause it to be respected, and to punish those who infringe it.

But we have said, as to the punishment applicable to the rupture of ban, the law has fixed the maximum of it at five years of imprisonment. It follows from this that the court can reduce it indefinitely.

The correctional tribunal of Rouen, profiting by this latitude, condemned George Gérard to one day's imprisonment. New applause was heard in the audience, and the court adjourned.

George, on leaving the court, went to the city prison, where he remained twenty-four hours. He was now square with society.

They might, it is true, have obliged him to submit now to that surveillance from which he had escaped, and have assigned to him a provincial town for a residence. But the police sometimes shows certain indulgences. George asked, besides, only one favor, which was, to leave France and return no more. It was granted him, and he rejoined his mother at Baden.

\* \* \* \* \*

They bought the small house that Marcelle loved so much, which she could not see again, but in which, according to her request, she reposes.

Her tomb is in the lower end of the garden, close by the river Limmat. It is entirely covered with flowers, which George himself cultivates.

He lives alone with his mother, as he lived three years in Léonia Street, until the time of his marriage.

But he does not devote himself any longer to study, as formerly. All mental labor is forbidden him. He limits himself to talking of her who is no more, with her who remains to him.

His only amusement consists in descending almost every day, for several miles, the impetuous course of the river Limmat.



His boat is tied to a willow near the tomb of Marcelle. He unties the rope, lies down in the bottom of his boat, and allows himself to be carried down stream by the current. This dizzy, vertiginous course lasts about two hours. To prolong it would be an attempt at suicide. There is a point where the Limmat goes rushing furiously against rocks which impede its course. Every boat that should venture near this place would be inevitably dashed to pieces.

Faithful to his promise to live for his mother, George stops some yards from this dangerous point.

But Madame Du Hamel is getting to be an old woman. She will soon leave her son alone in the world. Then he will

bury her near Marcelle, jump into his boat, as before, follow the current, and gladly dash in pieces against the rocks, which he avoided while his mother was living.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our most celebrated physicians have pronounced Cora incurable. She has become furiously and hopelessly insane. After remaining for some time in the house of Doctor Blanche, she is now at Charenton, which she will probably never leave.

Victor Mazilier has just married the daughter of a ship-owner of Havre.

Monsieur De Brives is completely ruined, but keeps on gambling.

THE END.







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
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
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
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
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
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
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